

# ART TREASURES IN SOVIET RUSSIA



SIR MARTIN CONWAY

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ART TREASURES IN  
SOVIET RUSSIA







THREE ANGELS PANEL BY RUBLEV.

*In the Iconostasis of the Trinity Church in the Troitskaya Lavra.*





# ART TREASURES IN SOVIET RUSSIA

BY  
SIR MARTIN CONWAY, M.P.

ILLUSTRATED

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## PREFACE

I HOPE that no one will be able to find in this book the faintest trace of propaganda. I did not go to Russia last summer to call down the fires of Heaven upon a Government of atrocious villains. Neither did I go to discover prophets and heroes or the dawn of a new Heaven upon the old Earth. I endeavoured to remain an absolutely impartial observer and to record what my eyes beheld. I kept myself entirely clear of politics and I saw few politicians. My one object was to see the works of art in Russia and to record the manner and prospects of their preservation. Like Sir Henry Wotton I went about "I pensieri stretti e il viso sciolto," but I did not carry lies in my mouth and truth in my notebooks. I set down from hour to hour what I saw, and I am printing my observations as I made them. The Russian Revolution was a terrific tragedy, but Russia was a country of tragedy before the Revolution and is a country of tragedy to-day. I decline to pass judgment on individuals or to deal out damnation to classes. I have insufficient data to go upon and I have not tried to collect such data. The scope of my observations was the world's heritage in the works of art in Russia; I paid little attention to anything else.

Mr. Ellis H. Minns has been kind enough to read my proofs. Otherwise the proper names would have been vilely spelt. I am deeply grateful to him.

LONDON,

M. C.

*February, 1925.*

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# ART TREASURES IN SOVIET RUSSIA

## I

### LONDON TO MOSCOW

There is not a single tunnel nor indeed a railway cutting, save one or two shallow troughs driven between wind-raised mounds of sand, between Rotterdam and Moscow, a distance of some 1,600 miles. Where the country is not a dead flat, bending out of sight in the distance by the curvature of the globe, it so slightly undulates as still to warrant the description and maintain the aspect of a plain. Nevertheless the journey is not without the interest of change for an observant traveller, but the mutations of scenery are the work of man rather than of nature. In Imperial Roman days all this region was a mixture of forest and morass. Now most of the forest-land is ploughed, the bogs are drained, and only here and there patches of barren heath proclaim the poverty of the soil.

Holland is quickly left behind, though not so quickly as small-scale maps would suggest. The scores of windmills that even within my memory

enlivened the landscape are now represented by but a few straggling survivors. Fields of tulips almost too bravely flaunted their shrill colours beneath the bright sunshine as we passed them by. This Dutch country is marvellously restful to travel through, once the bare coast region is left behind. For foreground to the green and grey landscape there was always on this trip a group of large golden arum lilies standing in a vase on the window-table of the carriage. They belonged to a lady who was on her way to Czechoslovakia full of enthusiasm for her own country. "We have got it back for ourselves. Isn't it splendid?" Opposite me was a Latvian who talked continuously in a language I could not understand. He had been twelve years in Glasgow, and asserted that he talked Scotch, not English. English he certainly did not talk. He had previously spent eight years working at Essen, but his German was no better than his Scotch. The conductor presently turned him out into a carriage of another class, and thus vacated a window-seat for an Englishman who had lived for eighteen years in the Canary Islands and preferred the climate of London.

We passed the tower of Utrecht, so familiar a feature in Van Goyen's pictures, and soon we were at the German Customs House at Bentheim and must turn out for the usual formalities, which were politely performed. "Going to Russia, are you? What is in this package? Insect powder? Good! You'll want it." There ought to be a hill at Bentheim with

a fine castle at the top, for was it not the subject of more than one of Jacob Ruysdael's best pictures? Often as I have passed this way I have never been able to discover from the train either the castle or the hill.

Now we are on the North German flat. It differs in a subtle way from Holland. The Westphalian farmsteads express a type of their own—a very ancient type. There are fruit trees about them and all are gay with blossom. The ploughed land alternates with woods of dark green pines sometimes mixed with and sometimes surrounded by a scattering of birches in the light green of their half-grown foliage. Presently we can see in the distance some low hills; and there is Osnabrück, where Europe once laboured for years over a peace-treaty scarcely more satisfactory than that of Versailles. Osnabrück also claims to possess the Chessmen of Charlemagne, but unfortunately they are not older than the twelfth century. We have crossed the Ems some way back and now comes the Weser. The hills grow larger to the south and keep us company all the way to Hanover. Amongst them are Goslar and Hildesheim and other well-remembered places, and they stretch back to the Harz where the Spectre of the Brocken haunts the heights. Memory makes a wide excursion round and away while the train keeps firmly to its long straight stretches; and then comes sleep and almost immediately, so it seems, we are in Berlin and the first stage of my journey is ended.



On newly arriving anywhere one is more likely to be struck by small things than by great. What I first noted in the streets of Berlin was the preponderance of horse-drawn over motor vehicles. There are many taxis, but vastly outnumbered by one-horse victoria cabs. It also seemed strange to me to see in the window of the first bank I passed a chalked-up list of odds on the Derby! Broadly speaking, however, the city looked superficially much as it did when I well knew it from forty to twenty years ago, but a few days' familiarity revealed great changes. The most obvious was the entire absence of military display. There was the "corner window" where, when I was a young student, one used every morning to see the old Emperor William seated at his desk with some official standing before him, like a schoolboy repeating his lessons; but the soldiers goose-stepping as they marched within his view are no more. The guard-house opposite is empty and no files of men hurry out to present arms as an officer passes. There is indeed hardly an officer to pass. No bands are playing, no regiments marching out or back along the Linden. The framework remains; the picture is gone.

Another great change is in the vanishing of the cafés and restaurants. The survivors are few; the supplies which most of them offer are meagre. One used to be able to eat anywhere and yet more easily to drink beer. Now a stranger who does not dine in his hotel must hunt for food. We read of Germans spending millions abroad. It is far otherwise at home.



There is no credit, no confidence. What people possess they hoard. A mortgage on real property is unobtainable at any price. Even the greatest manufacturers, the Krupps for instance, must pay  $3\frac{1}{2}$  to 5 per cent. per month for credit and can get little. Before the War the deposits in the Deutsche Bank were 1,400 millions of marks, now only 45 millions of Renten marks. All the deposits in German banks put together do not exceed 300 million Renten marks. It follows that upwards of 3,000 millions of the issued Renten marks are hoarded instead of being deposited in the banks, which therefore have no credit to lend. A few profiteers are rich; the middle classes are ruined. I met a wealthy American banker who was daily feeding two hundred gentlefolks, mostly aged, who lived comfortably on their savings before the War. They are all in absolute destitution and there are thousands in their case. The same authority told me from his personal observation that the poverty in the slums is extreme. Germans drinking champagne in Italy are not a sign of wealth but of want of confidence at home. They either hoard their money or they spend it; no one invests. Thus I wrote a few months ago. It is already ancient history.

But my journey had an artistic not an economic purpose. If Berlin is economically poor, it remains the city best équipped with Museums in the world. Other Museums may possess richer treasures, but in none are they more admirably arranged; in none is their significance so fully and so truthfully displayed.

Fortunately for Berlin, and indeed for lovers of Art all the world over, the great scholars by whom the Berlin Museums have been created still survive, and I had the pleasure of meeting many of them, with the venerable Dr. von Bode, now approaching his eightieth year, still active at their head. He showed me the accretions of two decades; wonderful pictures too numerous to mention, the façade of the Sassanian Palace at 'Mshatta, an unrivalled collection of objects illustrating the formation of Moslem Art, stucco work and ninth-century pottery from Samarra imitating Chinese wares, wonderful carpets in great number, and I know not what beside. With Dr. Friedländer I turned over the whole collection of Dürer drawings and observed several quite recent additions. Professor von Falcke led me round the Schloss one afternoon when it was normally closed. The halls, galleries, and chambers of Imperial state now finely accommodate a large collection of objects of decorative art, from the priceless treasure of Herford, the tenth-century jewels of the Empress Gisela, mediaeval furniture, Renaissance majolica, enamels and all beside, down to eighteenth-century porcelain and a whole population of dainty figurines. With Professor Götze I was privileged to pay an all too short visit to the prehistoric Museum which is so rich in the rare treasure of the Dark and early Middle Ages, as likewise of all pre-Christian periods. We followed the barbarian invaders from the Crimea across Europe into France, Italy, Spain, and Africa; saw them

embracing Christianity and passing into the days of written history. There was Dr. Goldschmidt too, the greatest authority on ancient ivory-carvings, by which he has revealed so many obscure passages in the history of Art in general. It was a great experience.

What, however, Berlin knew nothing about was present-day Russia. I went to all the travel agencies—British, International, and German; not one of them could tell me anything about trains to Moscow. Trains, they said, did run, but whether once or twice a week or oftener or less often no one knew and no tickets could be taken. I must get to Warsaw, where doubtless something could be discovered. Even the journey to Warsaw was none too simple, for one must change trains at the frontier and the Polish train does not wait for the German. The train I took was a slow one. When it came in it was already absolutely crammed; not a seat to be had and no first-class carriages. I was ninth in a compartment intended for seven and blocked besides with quantities of baggage. Prosperous Poles, returning from New York and Texas to see their parents, made light of my inroad and forthwith the American Eagle began to flap his wings and crow loudly. Oh the good trains there, the clean carriages, the good food and cheap! a dollar so easily come by if a man would work, not like this country, etc. I thought here was poor material for Communists to work on. The Texas man had gone out from Poland in poverty before the War. He was now able to spend \$1,500 on a holiday.

The flat plain continued everlastingly and we stopped at every station. Food, a strait and rascal diet, was only to be had off barrows at one or two places—hot sausages and beer at Frankfurt-on-the-Oder—but if we went hungry our eyes were still fed by the luxury of the fruit blossom. Thus in some four or five hours we came at last to the edge of Germany and stopped for examination of passports and a search for currency (which may not be exported) at the ill-sounding though not ill-smelling Stentsch. Zbaszyn, the next station, is the Polish frontier-post, where we were again examined as to papers, luggage, etc., losing another hour or so, but for compensation changing into a better train. Luck placed me next to a Polish gentleman, a well-known helper of England during the War, by whose aid all troubles of language, money, etc., disappeared. Mile after mile of the flat and fertile Polish plain was left behind—forest on the poor land, young crops mantling the arable with their shrill green. A deluge of rain had fallen the previous night and every blade, varnished with wet, glittered in the sunshine. I saw no grass-land; all was ploughed in strips, often of immense length, stretching far away and, as it were, angularly swinging with the passing of the train till one's eyes became dizzy with the relative motion.

At Posen we left our slow train to go bummelling along and employed the two hours before the express in visiting a good restaurant in the prosperous modern-looking town. Its streets are broad, its shops attrac-

tive, its public buildings stately, monuments of German Imperialism and intention to rule. It was night when we started on again, a night of bright moon and blazing planets. I must have slept well, for, suddenly awaking, lo! the sun gloriously rising on the bright green sea with island farms, all so trim—long one-storey thatched buildings usually grouped together in parallel succession. It looked like a garden country. Only near the farms were there any scattered trees—pollarded willows or poplars branched for firewood. No church spires jut out of the flat, for the churches are very small and poor, but here and there a windmill still lingers. I saw never a hedge nor even a fence dividing up the plain, which is uniformly carpeted with strips of different colours according to the crops they bear. Nor, though this is a cattle country, did I see either beast or pasture, for the beasts were in the cowsheds, and are fed upon better food than grass. Such is Poland as the traveller first beholds it. We descended at Warsaw in time for our morning coffee.

I was not long in learning that but one train goes weekly to Moscow and that I had missed it by a day! But good luck cast me into the arms of as kind and hospitable a people as are anywhere to be found, who showed me all there is to see in Warsaw. The city looks down from a height of some hundred feet or less upon the broad Vistula, and then away across the boundless plain to a level horizon where the world bends over. But the river is little in evidence from



the houses or streets and is only useful as foreground to the view of the city from the opposite bank. When Belotto Canaletto painted a score of pictures of Warsaw, which were carried off by the Tsars and have recently been returned, the streets were highly picturesque. The smaller houses of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and the nobles' palaces were generally gabled toward the roadway. Except in the slummy Old Town most of the earlier houses have been replaced by characterless modern shops and only some of the great houses are left in scattered distinction, with their forecourts before them like unto but larger than that still lingering before doomed Devonshire House. The Old Town is given over to a swarming and dirty population of Jews, who inhabit ancient houses that bear the marks of former dignity. Each has its round-arched doorway, framed in decorative stone, with wrought iron-work filling the tympanum, opening on a vaulted passage, deep and mysterious. The actual doors and shutters of many, strongly and fancifully iron-bound, are as old as the houses. There is a whole large square thus surrounded. Recovered from slumdom, cleaned and repaired, this square would be one of the most dignified in Europe. Practically all these houses are built of brick plastered over, the plaster often wrought into arabesques and mouldings but now much fallen away in patches; but plaster and brick alike are wrought by time into a picturesque shabbiness, pleasanter to look upon than to live with. The Jews in their long black

robes, which are usually old and dirty, their long boots, their black pork-pie caps, and hairy faces, match the shabby streets. The strange impression they make as a crowd culminates in the thronged and most filthy market they frequent, where the eatables for sale are incredibly repulsive.

The churches are mainly rococo with picturesque façades toward the street. St. John's Cathedral was anciently and is now plasterously and bastardly Gothic, but contains a most interesting series of wall monuments over which I lingered long. Many of them include the portrait of the deceased, painted in a medallion upon copper—a type common in Poland. The painter Bacciarelli, who worked so extensively in Warsaw, is thus commemorated.

The streets are lively with an apparently energetic crowd, especially on Sundays, happy-looking people, and among them the smallest children I ever saw competently moving about, scarcely reaching above their fathers' knees. One blot on the city is a vast new Russian Cathedral, not bad in itself, but out of key both in size and aspect with the place as a whole, and filling what was once an historic open space where Napoleon reviewed his troops. As a mark of unsympathetic dominance it is hated by the people, and now, but newly finished, it is being pulled down in this day of liberation. There is little new building in hand but much reconditioning, for now is a time of narrow adventure and much restricted credit. Though the main street abounds in banks, their

strong rooms are empty and the difficult days of changing from an inflated to a standard currency are far from safely passed.

If Warsaw possesses no National Museum or Picture Gallery of importance it is the fault of the Tsars who carried away every portable historic monument and would, if they could, have destroyed the very memory of Polish history. What they carried off has been or is now being honourably returned, and the ancient Palace of the Kings is being reconditioned and refurnished with its own pictures and tapestries. The walls, in places stripped of their plaster, reveal their mediaeval date by the blocked-up Gothic windows. A great pillared and vaulted basement is emerging from a labyrinth of partition walls and other encumbrances. The pilasters and plaster-work adornments of what must have been a splendid royal library have re-emerged from the squalor of Cossack guard-rooms, but the work must be done slowly for lack of funds. It is, however, being done well.

The new Museum of Arms, created during the last four years by Colonel Gembarzewski, shows what one man can accomplish when backed by a patriotic society. For thirty years he kept his eyes open to discover and record the existence of relics and memorials of Polish wars and warriors, but till the Russians went away he was not allowed to bring them together into a public collection. The moment the ban was removed he set to work gathering them in. Every one to whom he applied gave of their best and some



important private collections were contributed entire. He now fills the rooms of a large mansion with a collection of which he has a right to be proud. His weapons begin with the Stone Age and come down to the recent War. The prehistoric group is of great importance and includes notable Greek and Etruscan helmets and an Etruscan breastplate dredged up from the Vistula in perfect preservation. There are also the whole contents of a ninth-century Norman (Varangian) chieftain's grave with his pointed helmet, his sword, his unique silver sceptre, and all the harness of his horse which was buried beside him; also a Byzantine gold and silver cup which may have been an Imperial present. A lance-head engraved with a Runic inscription is of about the same date. The early and mediaeval swords fill several wall-cases. Among them is one with a Romanesque silver crucifix attached to the handle. The weapons used by Polish warriors in the later Middle Age and the Renaissance often show Oriental influence and many are actually of Oriental origin. There are scabbards made in Poland set with turquoises which are actual copies of Oriental originals. There is not much armour, and what there is is mostly late, but it includes two supremely fine Milanese helmets of parade, embossed with figure-subjects wrought in delicate relief and carried to the highest point of finish. When we come to the seventeenth century we are in a day of extraordinary elaboration of military costume. Most notable is the outfit of a Polish Hussar fully set up on

a life-size model of horse and man. These horsemen were equipped with great feathered wings attached to their shoulders which waved and flapped as they charged in a way intended to terrify an enemy! Those were indeed the pranking times of war. Beside these weapons I observed other antiquities of value; a nice little collection of Roman glass, the ornaments of a Slav woman of the eighth century, but far the rarest and in workmanship the best is a gold medallion, about  $2\frac{1}{2}$  inches in diameter, with the helmeted head of Alexander the Great on a boss in the centre and from it spreading a glory of pearly rays all round to a wavy edge. This little treasure was found in the neighbourhood of Babylon.

The small Lazienki palace in a charming park on the outskirts of Warsaw left an agreeable impression in my memory. It was built between 1767 and 1788 for King Stanislaus Poniatowski. The rooms are neither very many nor very large, but they are delightfully habitable and look forth on the prettiest surroundings. They also contain some good works of Art—Dutch pictures (Terburg, Palamedes, Bol, etc.), a bust of Mme. du Barry by Houdon, and entertaining wax statuettes of Voltaire and Rousseau seated at tables and nicely dressed up. There are of course plenty of portraits, ceilings by Bacciarelli and what not. The whole is pleasing rather than magnificent and more human than stately. The white façade toward the park groups well with the formal garden, and the walled lake, and the statues that stand about. A

rather famous open-air theatre is hidden by trees at no great distance. The columned stage is on one side of a strait of water, the little auditorium on the other, and there is verdure all around.

One afternoon I was motored out to the Willanow château, which belongs to the Potocki family. They live in one wing and throw the rest of the house and the park open to the public. There is a central structure with two towers built toward the end of the seventeenth century by John III Sobieski; the wings were added later. It is a wide, rather low building with a courtyard embraced by the wings. The whited stucco that covers it is moulded into various ornaments and the whole façade produces a somewhat stately effect. The rooms contain a good many treasures and objects of historical interest connected with Sobieski, John Casimir, and other great Poles. Among the pictures I noted a Flemish painting of many Martyrdoms dating from about 1500 and showing the traditions of Memling, but the portraits are much more important. Several rooms are decorated in the style of Louis XIV and there is good French furniture of that and later periods.

The popular impression, not in England only, but in Berlin and even Warsaw, that the journey to Moscow is something in the nature of an exceptional adventure is false. In actual fact it proved to be quite an ordinary example of railroad transport. The sleeping-cars presented nothing unusual. The train, if it halted long at the stations, made a good speed

between them and ran smoothly over a recently reconditioned permanent way. The remainder of Poland was like the rest, only more undulating as we passed eastward, and the villages near the road resemble that mediaeval village near Nuremberg, immortalized in a Dürer drawing, where the houses have low wooden walls and very high pitched roofs covered with thatch. Here too began a succession of hedges along the line, usually formed of spruces cut low and kept thick to block the winter snow-drifts. These hedges with many wide gaps in them stretch all the way to Moscow and from Moscow to Petersburg. They often obscure the traveller's view. Forests and wide stretches of tith succeed one another, and now and again a mediaeval sort of road comes in sight, just a wide strip of land along which carts find their devious way, seeking out in muddy times the hardest places. A maze of ruts wind in and out and cross one another with an intricate tracery. Just such roads are depicted in the backgrounds of pictures by Memling and other Flemish and German painters of his time.

At the wooden Customs House of Stolpce, Poland permitted us to quit her territory and, for payment of 7,000,000 units of I forget what pre-war kind, satisfied our hunger with sausages and beer. At the neighbouring Negoreloe we were admitted into Russia after due investigation of our papers and baggage, all very politely accomplished and, in my case, with a special gentleness, for in fact my visa was not in order. We had been told that the change

from Poland into Russia would be marked by an evident alteration in the general aspect of the country. It is not so. There is no visible alteration. There were, in fact, some evidences still of recent warfare—the scattered graves of the fallen, or of refugees in flight, here and there some ruined dug-outs, and here and there some encumberments of barbed wire; also many areas of cut down forest with young growth promising to renew them. They say that the weed of Kent is the elm; the weed of Russia is certainly the birch. Wherever cattle do not graze and the land is not cultivated, up spring birches in their thousands. They form the fringe of pine-woods and they invade the margins of the railway and every bit of vacant land. If Russia were depopulated to-morrow it would be a vast birch forest within ten years.

From the frontier to Moscow there is hardly any change of scenery. The heavy train pants and crawls slowly up many a long and gentle incline, for Moscow sits more than 500 feet above sea-level, but the ascent is very gradual and scarcely perceptible to the eye. The ground is in some parts more undulating than in others, but always there are the great pine-woods nearer or farther off and areas of ploughland or of grazing reaching far back between them. These vast ploughlands, so tidily farmed, with never a hedge or ditch to divide them, spread away like great green lakes with bays and straits penetrating and dividing the woods. The grass from which the snow had but recently departed looked like a smooth mown lawn.



The birches in their feathery light green, maidens among trees, scatter or cluster at their own sweet will, and the dark forests are like solid land rising out of a green ocean. Once only in the 800 miles between Warsaw and Moscow is this uniformity of scene interrupted, and that is where we cross a most lovely valley with a stream winding between lawn-like meadows with wooded banks sloping down to it on either hand from the somewhat higher plain. There are towns indeed and villages at rare intervals—Minsk, for instance, and Smolensk—but the railway keeps at a distance from them, and they in no wise diminish the broad impression one derives of vast spaces, apparently sparsely inhabited, though in fact peopled by enough folk to cultivate the land as largely and as tidily as one sees. The contrast is most marked between the finished tidiness of culture on the suavely modelled surface of the ground, the result of centuries of ploughing, with the rough crudity of aspect which a traveller beholds from the windows of a train in the United States. If anyone decries the Russian peasant to me in the future, with this landscape in my memory I shall be his faithful advocate, for surely as a ploughman at least he can have few superiors.

At Borisov, where we crossed the Berezina by a temporary bridge, and for some mysterious reason were ordered to close every window in the train before adventuring slowly over, the traces of the recent war were obvious, the dynamited wreck of the iron bridge

lying plain to see down below, and near it the scars of trenches and the wickedness of rusting barbed wire. Here in 1812 Napoleon in retreat fought his last great fight with the Russians and only just availed to cross the flooded river, with a broken army which never reformed. Again, much nearer Moscow we came close to the twin monuments that mark the site of the Battle of Borodino, by which he won the capital of the Tsars and lost the world. But recent wars and poignant memories still very fresh have dulled the sordid brilliance of those ancient exploits.

Right up to Moscow the same elements of landscape are maintained. We do indeed pass a few orchards, the first fruit trees we have seen in Russia. Cattle also become more numerous, or at any rate more in evidence, grazing in herds. Twice the attention is arrested by the unusual spectacle of fenced-in lands, the boundaries, I suppose, of some improving landlord of pre-revolutionary days. The first spring flowers we have seen are blossoming beside the line, and birds, which have been totally invisible to us for several hundreds of miles, become fairly numerous. Finally a few villas appear in little clearings in the woods, and then we know that suburbs cannot be far off and that Moscow is near at hand.

## II

### CONFISCATED TREASURES

As many people do not read prefaces, let me here repeat that I went to Russia for the purpose of seeing things and not people. My sole concern was the works of art in Russia, and especially those that had been in public possession or the property of the Tsars before the revolution. There were also the private collections, the palaces and great houses, the cathedrals and monasteries and their treasures, as to the fate of which the English public, at any rate, was entirely uninformed. I did not go to investigate the condition either of the country or of the people. I did not ask for a personal record of anyone I had to deal with. I took Russia as it is, its existing Government, its existing institutions, its existing authorities; and I made it a rule (to which I most rigidly adhered) to ask no questions of any Russian as to economic or political affairs, and neither to solicit nor to receive any confidences. I kept my eyes open, of course, and I consider myself authorized to record anything that I observed, but I have no political revelations to make or criticisms to offer.

During the few weeks I was able to spend in Russia



I employed the whole of every day—and the days in Russia are very long—from early morning till late in the evening in passing from one collection to another, and either beholding or even having in my hands a countless succession of precious objects; so that now, as I look back on my experiences as a whole, I seem to behold in a bewildering complex such a mass of treasure as can scarcely be gathered together within so small an area anywhere else in the world.

The public museums of Russia, the Hermitage in Petersburg, and the museums in Moscow are of old-standing fame. I knew what to expect. But the wealth of the Tsars, in palaces and in every kind of treasure within them, far surpassed all my expectations, and now, as I look back, there sparkle and shine in my memory incredible quantities of jewels, masses of plate, measured rather by tons than by numbers, countless quantities of porcelain filling gallery after gallery, and leaving yet 75,000 pieces, for which exhibition room cannot be found. I also recall great vases and tables, and even walls, of lapis lazuli and malachite, statues and busts, antique and modern, upwards of 20,000 pictures, vast collections of drawings and engravings, endless suites of furniture, walls covered with tapestries and carpeted floors by the acre, icons by the thousand, sheeted with embossed covers of silver-gilt and enamel, antiquities of all periods, including some 10,000 objects in gold, yielded up from the soil of South

Russia, State carriages and armour, vestments and robes heavy with pearls, books in golden bindings, chalices and crystal cups, engraved gems, crowns and sceptres and historical costumes, libraries of illuminated manuscripts and early printed books, and every object that the genius of man has brought into existence and his decorative instincts have embellished.

Had I not made notes from moment to moment, as this phantasmagoria of wealth passed before me, I could not now disentangle any consecutive story from an overburdened memory. The successive palaces that I visited seem to stretch themselves out into an endless series of stately rooms, decorated in the most elaborate manner by Russian and sometimes by French workmen of the highest attainable skill in their respective days. I look back upon great parks, beautifully planted, watered, and dotted about with temples, monuments, summer-houses, and porticoes and every fanciful creation of architects untrammelled by questions of expense. Thus it is with a sense of bewilderment that I face the problem of attempting to give the reader some idea of the wonderful adventure which it was my privilege to experience.

By the kindness of the authorities, the opportunities offered to me were perhaps unique. I was not restricted as to hours or places. Every door was opened. I ransacked the drawers of closed cabinets and penetrated the most secret chambers of the

Imperial House. In the Hermitage I might wander entirely alone, all night long if I pleased; I had its galleries entirely to myself hour after hour in daylight, which remained bright enough to see the pictures until after nine o'clock in the evening. Hour after hour I wandered alone through these galleries, smoking my pipe and sitting at will now before a gem-like Raphael, now inspecting the magic mystery of the great Rembrandts, now passing into the Winter Palace and lingering in absolute solitude in the very chamber where Catherine II died, and thus, when too tired for further serious study, I was able to let the atmosphere of this great museum, as it were, soak and penetrate even to the core of my unconscious self.

That such a mass of treasure should have passed safely through the chaos of an unparalleled revolution is indeed remarkable. Some loss there must have been, but it was trifling. Remember that the Winter Palace was carried by assault, and that crowds of people surged through its saloons and were reported in our newspapers at the time to have promiscuously looted every removable object. Remember also that there was actual fighting in the Palace of Gatchina, and that at Moscow the Kremlin was bombarded. The escape of such a multitude of valuable objects from theft or destruction seems almost miraculous.

It was far otherwise in France in 1789. How few of the contents of the Royal and Ecclesiastical Treasuries in that country now survive! Where is

the treasure of St. Denys, of Rheims, or of Chartres ? Hardly any of the works of French goldsmiths of the eighteenth century escaped the melting-pot. Ruin overtook the great abbeys, and many of the noblest examples of mediaeval architecture were levelled to the ground. In Russia nothing of the kind has happened. The monasteries, indeed, have been suppressed and their property confiscated, but so far from being injured, their paintings, their jewels, their vestments and embroideries have been carefully gathered together and many of them saved from the progressive decay which they were suffering. They are better cared for by the Soviet Government than they were by the monks.

How this fortunate result was arrived at I cannot say. Clearly, the psychology of the Russian crowd must have been very different from the Revolutionary French. There were moments of great peril, but all the museum directors and their staffs down to the lowest charwoman stood together as the fierce protectors of the property in their charge. It is worth record that when the galleries were practically in the hands of their staffs, over whom no one possessed any effective authority, when the custodians, who were for the most part superannuated soldiers, might have put into their pocket and walked off with small objects, the value of which was perfectly well known to them, not a single theft of the kind took place.

In the Palace of Gatchina, from which Kerenski

escaped as the Soviet troops were entering, one or two modern portraits of unpopular persons were rent, but in the very rooms where they hung delicate ornaments standing on slender tables or bureaux were absolutely untouched, and after the storm had passed by it required little adjustment to tidy up the rooms into the condition in which they had been left by the Imperial occupiers.

The Bolshevik theory is that the great landowners of Russia had no right to the land, and therefore that all their possessions were likewise improperly acquired, and ought to be regarded as public property. In practice they extended this theory to cover the possessions of the wealthy commercial classes, and, indeed, of everybody who possessed anything. A general confiscation of private possessions took place. Not merely were people driven from their houses, or at best permitted to continue residing in them in one or two rooms, but everything of any value was swept together, and if a picture or two, or a little china or crockery, was left to them it was as an act of grace, and not as a right.

The consequent assemblage of a mass of all kinds of objects has raised a condition of affairs such as can never before have arisen. Before the Revolution there were 11,000 pictures in the Hermitage inventory. This included not only pictures in the museum, but those in the Imperial palaces also. As the result of the confiscation 4,000 more pictures have come to the Hermitage. These do not include confiscated



icons, of which there will be much to say hereafter. They number many thousands. The important aristocratic houses remain, in many cases, just as their owners left them, and are treated as museums, and there are cases in which the owner has been left as custodian of his own house and collection.

In Moscow I was taken to a great building in the heart of the town which had been erected shortly before the war as a *Mont de Piété*, but had never actually come into use. One entered a vast vaulted hall, decorated with wall-paintings and occupied by a large number of clerks, mostly women. They were engaged in making an inventory of the plate and jewels which had been gathered together out of private houses. Every object, however trifling, was marked with its number, and described on a card, with its provenance, its weight and all other details worth record.

Upstairs I was led into a room almost as big, where I saw 26,000 pieces of silver plate in process of being studied and classified. It was a pathetic sight, so much of it being absolutely valueless except as private property. There was, for instance, a great heap, as though shot out of sacks upon the floor, of those little silver cups from which the Russians were wont to drink vodka before commencing their meals. There must have been many hundreds of them. Sets of such little cups in private houses might well have been a house-wife's pride, but as public property they are valueless; ranks of them upon the shelves



ELECTRUM VASE FROM KUL-ObA TUMULUS.  
*4th Cent. B.C.*



GOLDEN CUP OF HELLENISTIC DATE WITH GREEK INSCRIPTION.  
*From the Don Province.*





in a museum would be devoid of all interest. The same is true of countless teapots and coffee-pots and other objects of domestic utility of small artistic merit and no public interest. I noted long rows of pineapple cups, mainly of late eighteenth-century German manufacture, quantities of tankards and beakers, candlesticks and soup tureens, and every kind of utensil. The sight of such a number of second- and third-rate objects was wearying. One was forced to conclude that there are only two ways of profitably disposing of this mass of silver, either to send most of it to the melting-pot or to sell it off into private ownership once more.

Of course, from all this collection there did emerge a certain number of things of real value. Such, for instance, was a Sassanian silver vase, with high reliefs moulded upon it. But this was well known, and had long ago been published. There was also, from the Stroganov Palace, a Byzantine dish of the seventh or eighth century, with a woman sacrificing to a serpent modelled upon it and low reliefs on the back. When a governor was nominated to a province in the time of Catherine II he received as a gift a silver dinner service; several such services have now come into the hands of the State, and some of them are very fine. A good deal of Old English plate has turned up: a flagon by Philip Rolls, another by Robert Green, a big Swedish tankard of 1745, a fine Russian bowl of 1644. There were also plenty of English dishes, some by John

Schofield. A number of characteristic Russian trays with bent-over handles were grouped together, one with a splendidly embossed double eagle and fine niello decoration of the end of the seventeenth century. There is much German plate, and in particular a silver elephant made in Nuremberg in the sixteenth century. Italian goldsmiths are but poorly represented, but there is a fifteenth-century enamelled chalice by Andrea Arditì. A few pieces of Louis XIV plate have emerged, but not comparable, either in number or importance, to the work of the English goldsmiths.

At one end of the room was a great heap of icons, covered with embossed silver-gilt plates, and some beautifully adorned with enamels of the seventeenth century. There were also many enamelled haloes, liturgical enamelled books in jewelled metal bindings, and crosses large and small. There were quantities of boxes full of tea services and the like, and among the larger objects there was a huge silver jug, an eighteenth-century font from Astrakhan, and some other very large vessels. In one corner were gathered together a heap of forgeries, including a silver reliquary statuette copied after the well-known Sainte Foye at Conques. A small number of Chinese vessels were mostly unimportant, but I noted a three-legged Sung bowl inlaid with malachite and enamels.

The objects I have just mentioned are merely those I happened to observe in a casual glance over these 26,000 things. Doubtless I overlooked many

a fine cup or dish, but I derived from the whole a lesson that public property and private property in this kind are totally different things.

Any country that decides to put an end to private property puts an end at once to all but the more monumental categories of art. Museum collections must mainly be recruited from objects made for private enjoyment, for no artist would manufacture cups and caskets for purely museum exhibition. Most of the world's treasures and all the best of them have been made for use by individuals, especially by individuals occupying public positions and wearing their ornaments in an emblematic and representative sense. The chief motive for the production of works of decorative art is the desire to please the individual owner. Second- and even third-rate pictures can give great pleasure in a private house, but they are valueless in a public gallery. There is all the difference between a thing made for a public purpose to celebrate, if you will, some important event or to preserve the memory of some estimable personage, and a thing made for use in the everyday life of ordinary persons.

The wholesale Russian confiscation proved to me how little the public gains by this vast multiplication of individual losses. Many a little icon, with its often trumpery silver frame, may have been the treasured possession of some pious individual and its loss a cause for a personal pang to the innocent owner. I could not but feel that the sum of these

pangs must have amounted to an immensity of grief which it made the heart sore to imagine. No doubt this was but trifling compared with the sorrow of being driven from a well-loved home, enriched by family traditions of several generations, and all of that grief added together must have been far outweighed by the deaths of parents and children, relations, and friends in numbers but vaguely to be estimated. Such are the individual horrors which always accompany a revolution, and only the historian centuries later can say whether or not the ultimate outcome was worth while in the interests of humanity at large.

It goes without saying that much privately owned jewellery must have fallen into the hands of the State. Of that I saw nothing, and I made no inquiry about it. It is quite possible that it may have been sold abroad, and that the report of the sale of the Crown jewels may have arisen in consequence.

Of the ecclesiastical property confiscated I saw a considerable amount, but by no means more than a small fraction. Much of it was very inferior in artistic character. The nineteenth century, in particular, produced an immense supply of indifferent religious paraphernalia entirely valueless from the artistic point of view. I was shown in, I think, seven of the upper rooms of the Winter Palace an exhibition of some of this confiscated silver work, and it was a wearisome sight. There were a few objects of great beauty and value. Such, for instance,

were the chalices, patens, baskets for the sacred bread, as well as a book-binding and censer, all of gold, beautifully enamelled, and dated 1678-9. These were Moscow work, and of a type of which few other examples are known. They are of exceptionally fine quality. There was also a group of similar vessels adorned with niello of about the same date, likewise of Moscow manufacture. A punch-bowl, by Robert Green, was used in the cathedral of the Winter Palace, for holy water. A cross dated 1701 is enriched with pearls and other jewels, and was made hollow to contain relics. A splendid little pectoral cross of the seventeenth century, decorated with pearls, particularly attracted my attention. It was one of several of about the same size. An icon very delicately painted, dated 1663, and signed by Simon Ushakov, a famous painter in his day, is adorned with open-work, and with foliation made of jewels fastened to it. There were also some chalices from Augsburg, pyxes of the eighteenth century by well-known Russian goldsmiths, a wonderful chalice of gold with cherubs and other figures in relief modelled about it, silver hanging lamps, a great silver model of St. Isaac's Cathedral as a reliquary, and, finally, some fragments of the silver iconostasis of the Kazan Cathedral, which was looted and destroyed by a revolutionary mob, one of the very few outrages of that kind. To judge from the pieces here brought together, the work must have been rather coarse.

But the great bulk of the collection, which filled



these seven rooms and glittered against the purple velvet hangings covering their walls, was made up of silver-gilt icon covers, embossed with the forms of the Virgin and Child or some other sacred subject, with holes cut in them, through which the face and hands of the painted panel behind could be seen. These icon covers are seldom of any great merit. They took their origin in little applied haloes, generally very finely wrought, and in the seventeenth century beautifully enamelled, which were attached round the heads of painted figures in pictures. By degrees such applied decoration increased in area till finally it covered the whole picture and only left the flesh parts visible. Multitudes of such icon covers were made, I think, mainly in the nineteenth century, and the walls of room after room that I traversed were almost entirely covered with these silver-gilt plates. Sometimes they were also decorated with jewels, but I think that generally these were imitations.

It is the fashion to say that such jewelled icons presented by pious donors to monasteries and churches were robbed by the ecclesiastics themselves, who sold the real jewels and replaced them by paste. I doubt whether in any except a very few cases valuable jewels were set on these objects of devotion. The mass of very inferior work here brought together and displayed at one time was very oppressive, and when I was asked what use I thought could be made of all this vast accumulation, I could only suggest that the melting-pot was its obvious destination.



The seven rooms filled with ecclesiastical treasure which I saw in the Winter Palace contain just one-fifth of the treasure which has been brought together from this part of the country. It is being carefully inventoried and studied by the most competent experts. It is claimed that every object of any artistic merit is carefully sorted out, and it is believed, and I think justly, that enough will finally be provided to fill several museums especially devoted to the display of ecclesiastical art. Two such museums are being created in the neighbourhood of Moscow. One, in the Novo Dévichi Monastery, is to contain the work of what is known as the Sophia period; another, in the New Jerusalem Monastery, is confined to the works of the Nikon period. I was invited to visit these museums, but, as they involved a railway journey of some fifty miles out and back, time failed me, and I was unable to see them. There is also a museum of ecclesiastical art in the Troitski Monastery, and of that I shall have more to say hereafter.

Lovers of art will be specially anxious to know about the pictures confiscated from private collections and ecclesiastical foundations. The number confiscated is very large, but few can be described as of great importance. Several of the private collections have been left intact in the houses of their owners. I will deal with these later. A great number have been gathered together in the top floor of the Hermitage. There one can wander through room after room and corridor after corridor practically

full of pictures, not hung on the walls but leaning up against one another or spread out on the floor for first examination. These rooms in the old days were occupied by the Maids of Honour of the Court, and here and there you come across it may be a bath or the remains of a kitchen or some remnant of room-decoration, and now and again there is a piece of furniture that has been left behind—some broken-legged chair or abandoned chest. The main gallery is upwards of 100 yards long.

The pictures are of all qualities and descriptions. There are rooms devoted to landscapes, others to still-life, one full of cocks and ducks, another of cattle, others of horses, seascapes, rivers, shipwrecks, sea-fights, calms, and so forth. Separate groups of rooms are devoted to the Italian and other schools respectively. One is full of sprawling nudes, another of flower paintings used as frames to other subjects. There are several rooms of portraits, and even then the half is not told. I noticed a portrait of Laud and other copies after Vandyke and Kneller. One small portrait described as of Cromwell and dated 1639 presented no likeness that I could discover to the great Protector.

Nothing can be imagined more dreary than this sad assemblage of pictures, most of which were of no value from the point of view of a public collection, though good enough for private houses. The still-lives would have sufficed to decorate a dozen dining-rooms, but I doubt whether three of them would

have been worth hanging in any public gallery. The reader will easily imagine the bewildering effect produced upon one's eye and mind by passing in review so great a multitude of pictures. One wandered through the derelict rooms with a dim consciousness of the lives that were led in them, of the people that occupied them, of the aims and the heart-breaks and the triumphs which they had experienced; a sense that all this was gone, utterly dead and vanished into the past, and that nothing of it remained beyond the parquetry floors, the tattered wall-papers, the decorated ceilings. The whole place seemed peopled by ghosts. A deadly silence reigned. No one came there; no one had any business there except the curators who were studying pictures. It was a sort of Hades into which one might imagine the dead pictures passed in some after-life of unbroken sleep.

The cream of the collection is brought together in the Library, and consists of a few very wonderful pictures, the most notable being a small landscape by Rembrandt of his later period, almost a monochrome in brown, a mysterious composition of river and castle-crowned hill, rocks, bridges, trees, and a bewildering sky struck through with light, the whole painted with extraordinary inventiveness of technique, certain parts of it being accentuated by strokes made by the butt-end of the brush-handle digging into the wet paint. This comes from the Paul Stroganov collection. The Stroganov family, in fact, seem to

have had far the best taste of any of the Russian aristocracy. They had, I believe, three separate collections, two in Russia, and one in Rome, which, of course, has escaped the clutches of the Russian Government. From them also comes a beautiful small Annunciation by Filippino Lippi, a predella-panel known to art-lovers; also a very brilliant painting by one Niccolo, pupil of Gentile da Fabriano. From the Gagarin collection comes a Crucifixion attributed to Duccio. There is also a tondo of the Virgin and Child, attributed to Piero di Cosimo, and there are four small panels by Botticelli, recently published in the Burlington Magazine. These last also come from a Stroganov collection. Of Sotte Cleve's portrait of a man pointing with his right hand and with his left folded, which is in Lord Spencer's collection, there is here a copy with a coat of arms in the corner and inscribed "M.E.S.S. I.B. de Grimaldi Genevois." The arms and the inscription, which appear to be an addition, are probably of no authority.

The Russian aristocracy as buyers of pictures possessed no such flair as did that of Austria. None of their collections can be put in comparison, for example, with that of Prince Liechtenstein, or with the Czernin, Harrach, or Schwartzenberg collections. The Russian private collections give one the impression of having been bought in haste, and more or less wholesale. The number of Dutch pictures in them is very large, but they are mainly second-rate

examples of good painters or fairly good examples of second-rate painters. The effect of seeing such a quantity of works of art of a low average value is depressing. Once again I could not but feel how valueless work of this kind is when gathered together in quantity. Many of these pictures would have been pleasant to see one at a time in private houses. Possibly they might even fulfil some function in small country museums, but the problem of their distribution is a difficult one. The simplest way would be to disperse them by auction.

The paintings which belonged to the Academy at Petersburg have been removed to the Hermitage for better preservation. They, along with other new acquisitions, are grouped together in some rooms on the first floor of the Winter Palace, which were formerly occupied by Catherine II. Among them I noticed a Flemish picture—an “Adoration of the Shepherds,” perhaps by Ambrose Benson, and there are two or three other Flemish pictures of little importance. Some rather fine French pictures are in these rooms by Mignard and Rigaud, including a notable portrait of a philosopher. Seven Watteaus have been brought from various Imperial palaces, and there is also a Lancret. “That picture,” said the Russian gentleman who accompanied me, “belonged to my father-in-law, and these chairs on which we are sitting were the property of a friend of my family, and I have often sat on them after dinner drinking coffee.” He spoke with no sort of



bitterness, and seemed, on the whole, rather pleased that these objects should have passed into public possession.

A lively little Boucher landscape hung above some furniture which once belonged to Sir Robert Walpole, a romantic scene in low tones of blue and brown, like a view of the Trianon Hamlet. I noticed a Lepicié that at first sight resembled a Le Nain, and quite a number of other French pictures, including, of course, the ubiquitous Greuse, and countless decorative panels by Hubert Robert. No painter, indeed, seems to have been more popular in Russia than Robert. It seemed to me that in every palace and in every nobleman's house that I visited there was one or more rooms entirely decorated with his panels, and in addition there were a great number of paintings by him hung in the picture galleries, so that one gets the impression from Petersburg alone that he was a manufacturer on a large scale of room decorations, the wonderful thing being the high average of the quality of his work regarded from a decorative point of view.

There are many pictures also by Joseph Vernet. Among the Italian pictures are several Dresden views by Belotto, one showing a great man passing by in his coach and humble people making obeisance. By Belotto also are some charming views of Pirna, a delightful old town with houses nodding over the streets and squares. There are views of Venice, by Marieschi, an architectural phantasy by Longi, a

caricature of a shabby old man by Ghezzi, and six delightfully romantic Magnascos, besides another great room full of late Italians which I should weary the reader by naming.

Passing to the nineteenth century, there are a few interesting English pictures, such as the portrait of Pitt from the Vorontsév collection, several interesting paintings by Wright of Derby, including a Rembrandtesque group of iron-smelters, one or two Wilkies, and a great multitude of portraits of Russian notables painted by Dawe and his assistants, who also fill a long gallery, remaining as it was left, where Alexander I is commemorated with the generals and statesmen of his time. We pass into another suite of rooms full of later French pictures: a portrait of Josephine by Gerard, an Ingres, Delaroche's well-known "Cromwell gazing into the coffin of Charles I," paintings by Horace Vernet and a delightful group of pictures by artists of the Barbizon school, including the landscape painted by Rousseau in 1833 which made his reputation, and other landscapes by Diaz, Dupré, Corot, D'Aubigny, and the rest, and several marbles by Rodin. It is more than probable that in the hasty glimpse which was all I had time to give to this multitude of pictures I failed to note or overlooked works of importance.

It would take days, and even weeks, instead of the hour or two which was all that I could spare, to inspect carefully and to name even approximately this vast anonymous assemblage. That work is being



thoroughly taken in hand by competent experts, of whom the Hermitage possesses a very numerous staff. Owing to the poverty of the Soviet Government they can be but poorly paid, but they work with a devotion which it would be hard to equal in any other museum. In due time the published results of their researches will be placed at the disposal of all lovers of Art.

I ought to add that the Hermitage, in addition to the multitude of pictures that have come to it through the nationalization of private property, has not ceased also to purchase works of art, though its monetary resources are necessarily small. Quite recently it has bought a very fine "Bacchus" by Caravaggio, a striking figure of a rather wild-looking youth, with vine leaves in his hair and grapes and fruit lying about him. He is nude except for a splendid sweep of red drapery, and the figure is made to stand out in boldest relief by the characteristic dark shadows of the painter. The picture was famous in contemporary record, and is one of the first painted by Caravaggio in Rome.

I have thus far said nothing about the multitude of icons which have come into the possession of the State. I am not quite sure whence they all came. The suppressed monasteries must have yielded a great number. I believe that many were brought out of churches, and probably also from private houses, but I forgot to make inquiries on this matter. All the churches I visited contained the icons neces-

sary for worship, and so did the little shrines, which exist in considerable numbers.

For example, near the gate of the Kremlin the much-venerated Iberian Virgin still remains in her gilded shrine—a large scale icon enclosed in a niche, or one might call it the sanctuary of the little chapel, the whole interior of which shimmers with gilt and embossed icons and gold-framed paintings and many a metal hanging lamp glittering in the gloom. When I entered, the confined space was crowded with simple folk crossing themselves and kissing the glass-covered icons. A ragged man, one of the few ragged people I saw in Moscow, was very devout. Some people knelt, some stood. They came and went quickly, and there was a crowd lined up outside the door in two rows, leaving a gap for entrance. Among them were some beggars. The icon itself, which has a long legendary history, could scarcely be seen, and I could in no way estimate its merit. It appeared to be entirely repainted in all its visible parts. It is however not an important picture, being only a copy of the Iverskaya on Mount Athos brought to Moscow in 1654.

I must have seen many hundreds of icons, but even so only a small proportion of the numbers that have been gathered together. There were a quantity in the Kremlin, a good many in the Hermitage; others in the Treasury, all of which were mere chaotic assemblages not yet dealt with. In the Alexander III Museum at Petersburg a large collection of cleaned

and chronologically arranged icons fills several rooms. Another scientifically arranged group is displayed in the Tretyakov Gallery at Moscow, and there are, I believe, a great number in the Morozov Gallery in the Vendenski Pereulok, as well as in the Ostroúkhov Museums, both in Moscow; but these last I had no time to examine. It will easily be perceived that the amount of material which exists, and which is being carefully handled, must serve to throw new floods of light upon the history of Russian pictorial art, about which up to the present time little is accurately known.

When these pictures were first brought together they were in a terribly bad condition. The first necessity was to clean them. This was no easy matter. Very skilful craftsmen were employed, and, indeed, some had to be specially trained for the work. Certain rules were laid down; the most important and beneficent of them was that under no circumstances whatever was any repainting or even touching-up permitted. Such as the pictures emerged when dirt and re-paint had been removed, such they were to remain. Many were so encumbered with the solidified dust of ages as to show hardly a recognizable feature of any kind; yet it was amongst these, the apparently worst in condition, that some of the best results have been obtained.

I paid a long visit to the studio in the Kremlin, where the work of restoration is being carried on. When I use the word "restoration," the limitations

above described must be remembered as implied if not stated. Nothing, in fact, is being done which is normally included in the term "restoration." No attempt is made to bring the pictures back to any supposed completeness or to repair with modern work the ravages of time. I do not think that in any picture gallery in the world is more piety observed toward the work of ancient artists than in the Restoration Studios in Moscow and Petersburg; nor is it possible to praise too highly the meticulous care with which these precious, though often terribly damaged, relics of the past are handled.

The repainting of icons, which has gone on for centuries, has been a very different affair from the ordinary re-paintings and re-touchings which the pictures of the Old Masters have had to endure at the hands of museum directors and private owners. An icon, for instance, of the Virgin and Child may have been wholly re-painted as many as six or seven times with so little regard to the original design that in the end it may have come to depict a Head of Christ or of some Saint. I saw several icons which had been cleaned in strips, leaving in succession a band of each of the re-paintings upon the original picture, and it was amazing to see how recklessly successive painters had dealt with the work delivered into their hands.

Already, about the year 1080, we find the Metropolitan John II ordering that old icons should be restored, so that the terrible re-painting from which

they have suffered goes back to the earliest times. It is not always possible to date, even approximately, these various layers, but the last two, or even three, of them sometimes seemed to be the work of the nineteenth century. I gathered from these and other observations that the taste of the Russian ecclesiastics of recent times had sunk to a very low ebb. They appear to have dealt with wall-paintings and other decorations of their churches and monasteries in a like reckless manner, slathering over the most delicate work with the crudest colouring.

Professor Anisimov is the director of the Moscow Restoration School, and Mr. Chirikov deserves fame as an astonishingly skilful physician for damaged pictures. When I visited the studio I found one of his skilful pupils dealing with a twelfth-century Byzantine picture of St. Michael. The artist who had painted it was a Greek, but he had worked in Russia, as the inscription on the panel revealed. A tiny figure of the donor kneels at the foot of the Saint. With infinite care the half of this precious painting had been revealed, and I watched the craftsman for a quarter of an hour painfully removing an accumulation of colours and filth from less than a quarter of a square inch of the surface. What I saw convinced me of the patience, the skill, and the reverence with which these old pictures are being handled by the experts who have them now in charge.

I saw other twelfth- and thirteenth-century panels which had been or were being dealt with; a fine





A TWELFTH CENTURY BYZANTINE ICON OF ST. MICHAEL, FROM THE  
USPENSKI CATHEDRAL.





fourteenth-century icon thought to be the work of the painter Theophanes; one almost certainly by the famous Rublëv; and a processional icon with the Virgin and Child on one side and the head of Christ on the other—a work of very early date, historically recorded as having been carried by St. Vladimir, the whole now very black, but probably destined to emerge from beneath this veil of filth in reasonably good condition.

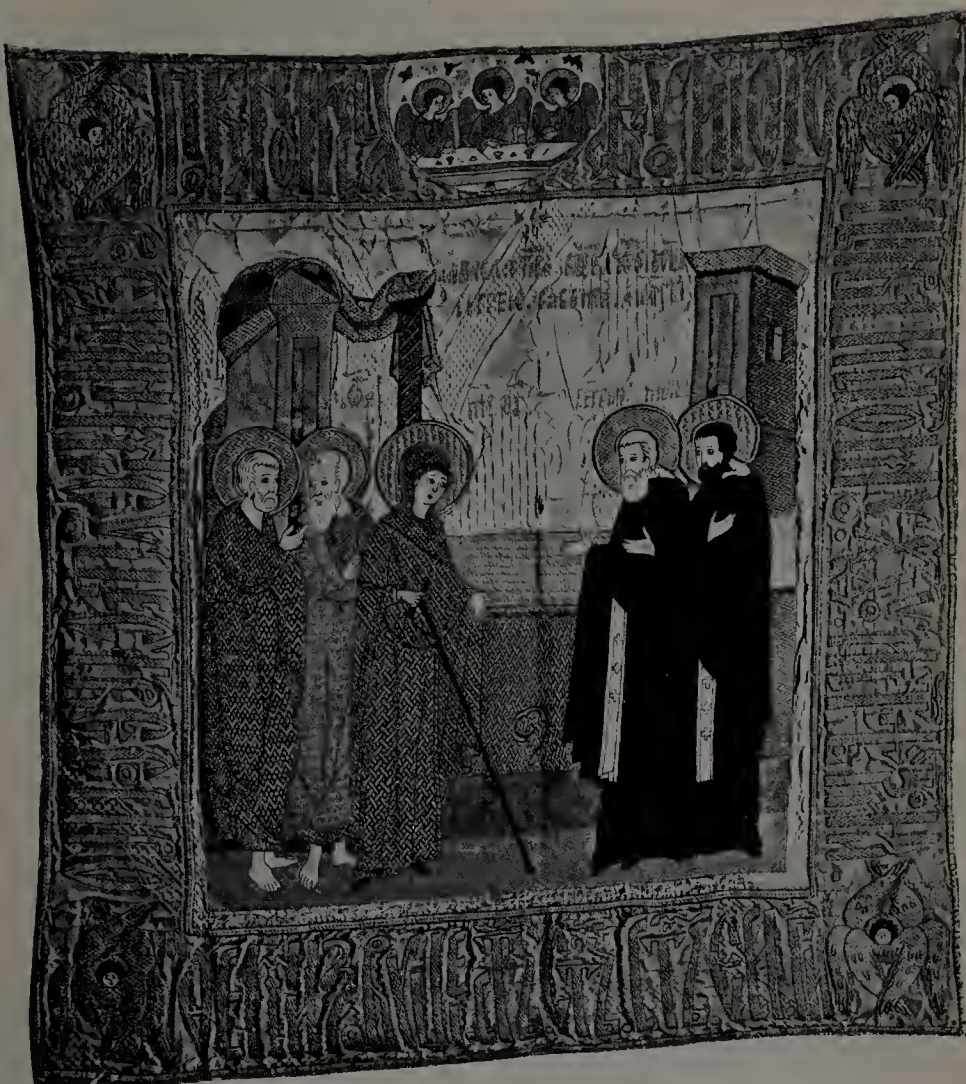
Some of the most famous icons from the great churches in Russia were here to be treated, and will no doubt be returned to their shrines. Such, for instance, is the “Christ with golden hair,” from the Uspenski Cathedral in the Kremlin, a very early Russian work in pure Byzantine style, dating from the time before the Mongol invasions. It is an amazingly impressive picture, almost in monochrome, the face very grave, with long, fine nose, and great shadows about the eyes.

The repair of embroideries is being actively carried on in an adjacent studio under the direction of Madame Shabelski, a once wealthy lady who had formed for herself a large collection of old embroideries, which she had made her principal subject of study for many years. Her own collection has now become public property, and she herself has been put in charge of the embroideries belonging to the State, and loves every one of them.

✓ The importance of the art of embroidery in Russia, especially in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries,

is well known by those who have interested themselves in Russian art. It came to me as a surprise to see the quantity and elaboration, as well as the fine quality, of the numerous embroideries, used not merely for vestments, but for altar cloths, and still more often as large palls for covering tombs. These old embroideries had been treated with as little respect as the old icons. Not only were they encumbered with dirt, but all kinds of hideous additions had been made to them. Faces painted on canvas, or even cardboard, had been sewn over the original. Pieces of taffetas in shrill and inharmonious colours cover up delicate inscriptions and arabesqued backgrounds. Some of the finest pieces had been the worst treated.

Madame Shabelski and a group of young ladies under her direction are bringing back as far as possible into their original condition these priceless embroideries. I was able to watch them at work and to observe how they also treat the damaged treasures which pass through their hands with a reverence and skill not less in this line than that with which the icons are handled.



VISION OF ST. SERGIUS. 16TH CENTURY EMBROIDERY IN THE  
TROITSKAYA LAVRA.



### III

## A SURVEY OF RUSSIAN ART

The history of Russian art may be regarded as taking its beginning in the time of Vladimir (c. 956–1015). The reader may be reminded, or even perhaps informed, that that considerable personage, after a wild career of fighting and conquest, settled himself down at Kiev as ruler of a large part of what we now call Russia. From and after him descend the long line of rulers who in process of time called themselves Tsars, and lasted down to the other day.

Vladimir, when he had sown his wild and pagan oats, became a highly respectable monarch, and sent out a commission to sample the religions of neighbouring States. They went to Germany and thought little of the religion of that country. They examined the Moslem States and reported that “there was no gladness among them, but only sorrow and a great stench,” and that their religion, on the whole, was not a good one. But when they came to Constantinople they seem to have fairly lost their heads. The Emperor Basil II, knowing of their quest, turned on all the resources of the Eastern Orthodox Church, and made so great a display of splendour and glory that “we no longer knew whether we



were in heaven or on earth, nor can we tell of such beauty." They therefore reported strongly in favour of Orthodox Christianity.

Now the Emperor Basil II was a very wise monarch. Observing the development of a great power to the north of him, he thought it well to obtain its goodwill. He accordingly offered Vladimir his sister Anna to wife. The offer was eagerly accepted. Vladimir was baptized at Kherson, in the Crimea, in 988, and forthwith proceeded to baptize his people in herds and droves. Princess Anna took with her to Kiev artists and other civilized persons, and Kiev became, from an artistic point of view, part of the Byzantine province.

It is interesting to remember that Theophanu, another sister of Basil II and, like Anna, a daughter of the Emperor Romanus II, had already in 972 been given in marriage to Otto II, the Emperor of the West. She likewise had been accompanied to her new home by artists, writers, and courtiers learned in ceremonial. It was from that group of Byzantine craftsmen that the wonderful art which illustrated the Ottonian Empire took its origin. Thus these two Princesses were the means of giving an important and, as it proved, most effective artistic impulse to what were to be two great nations of the future, Russia and Germany. A few years after this conversion of Russia, Basil II reaped no small advantage out of his alliance, for the troops of Vladimir came to his help at a most critical time, and helped to re-establish the Eastern Empire once again firmly on



its feet. It is, perhaps, not surprising that after the death of Vladimir he was regarded as a saint, and, I believe, formally canonized.

It is therefore at Kiev that we must look for the earliest productions of Russian art, but Novgorod, in the north, not very far from Petersburg, was destined to become a yet more important early centre of painting. Novgorod had been the capital of Rurik when the Norse or Varangian chiefs in the ninth century laid the foundations of a commercial State in the north and extended their power over a largish area. Such decorative works of art as have come down to us from them differ in no material degree from the Scandinavian products of the same period, and there were other tribes possessing arts of their own whose activities can be traced back to an early date. Of them we shall have a word or two to say hereafter; but these barbaric crafts and craftsmen belong rather to archæology than to the history of any art that can be called Russian. ✓

It was the contact of the Russian with the Byzantine Court, and the adoption by the Princes of Kiev of Byzantine Christianity, and to some extent of Byzantine civilization, that called into being an art that can be described as eventually Russian. The artists of Kiev and those of approximately the same date, who settled and worked at Novgorod were Greeks, and the work that they produced differed at first in no respect from the products of the studios at Constantinople. In the twelfth and thirteenth

centuries, schools of painting where Greeks and Russians worked together were in existence in monasteries both at Kiev and Novgorod. It is now in and around Kiev that the bulk of existing examples of Byzantine art of the eleventh and twelfth centuries has been found, but there are also some important twelfth-century wall-paintings in the church at Nereditsa near Novgorod. Chroniclers record that Vladimir brought Greek masters to build the Church of our Lady at Kiev, and that Greek artists settled not only there, but also at Novgorod, at Vladimir, and at Moscow. A monk of Kiev, named Alimpi, is mentioned in the eleventh century as an excellent painter of icons, and the names of other artists are recorded. The churches of Kiev were decorated with mosaics and wall-paintings entirely Byzantine in style, while the icons and all manner of decorative objects for religious, ceremonial, or courtly display were the same in character and technique as those that were contemporaneously produced in the capital of the Eastern Empire.

It is by Russian archæologists and the enterprise of Russian Governments down to the present day that the investigations have been constantly pursued in and around Kiev which have led to such important discoveries. Excavation has dragged from the soil a very considerable number of works of the goldsmith's and enameller's art, necklaces and belts, earrings, and other precious objects mostly fashioned in gold, which now fill a small room in the Hermitage

Museum. Scarcely less important are the icons which to-day are being revealed by the tenderly handled scalpels of the craftsmen in the Kremlin. I have written above of the St. Michael which I saw emerging under such treatment. That, however, is only one among many Byzantine paintings which have been newly revealed or which are certain to be revealed in the Restoration Studio. Several icons of a traditional antiquity, which is almost certainly warranted, are known, but at present they are hidden beneath repeated coatings of re-paint.

Thus within the next few years we may expect to be shown a thoroughly representative collection of Byzantine paintings, some of which may go back as far as the fifth century. One or two of even earlier date are stated to have come from farther East. Students of art history will await with impatience these exciting revelations, and will desire that nothing may occur to change or delay the enlightened policy now being pursued.

In the Alexander III Museum is a precious tenth-century Transfiguration, in which Christ in a mandorla is depicted against a red background. The figures are well drawn with small hands and feet and the work is of a refined quality. Unfortunately the group of Apostles below has been broken off. This fine example of Byzantine work closely resembles a miniature in a tenth-century manuscript at Mount Athos. The Vladimir Virgin, which I saw in the Restoration Studio, came from Constantinople to

Vladimir about the year 1050 and was removed into the Assumption Cathedral at Moscow in the fourteenth century. It is characteristic work of the best years of the Byzantine Renaissance. Another eleventh-century icon also brought from Constantinople depicts St. Gregory in white vestments with embroidered crosses on his stole. The figure lacks relief and depends for effect upon the outlined areas of colour.

There are twelfth-century icons in the Historical Museum, some or all of which may have been painted by Greeks in Russia, while thirteenth-century painting is still more numerous represented. I would name a colossal bust of Christ of great dignity which I saw in the Restoration Studio. Its background is silvered and small subjects are painted all round it as a frame. A processional picture in the Alexander III Museum was of special interest to me as an ancient example of a half-length Madonna type, in which the Child reaches up to kiss the Mother. Roger van der Weyden and other fifteenth-century Flemish painters adopted and humanized this design in many a devotional picture. Another such processional picture of like date belonging to the Annunciation Cathedral has a fourteenth-century Death of the Virgin added on the back. To the end of the thirteenth century belongs a full-length gold-background painting of two Saints with small heads, full face, and with symmetrically facing beasts embroidered on their robes after the fashion of brocades of the time. This

is in the Alexander III Museum. There also can be seen a half-length Christ, evidently painted at Constantinople, for in one corner of it is a lively little portrait of a high Byzantine official. Unfortunately a corresponding portrait in the opposite corner has been rubbed away. St. Thomas in the same Museum is an obviously Byzantine patrician type, whilst a rude picture of about the same date shows curious likeness to some Bulgarian miniatures.

Thus we approach the truly Russian School of painting which, however, did not arise at Kiev but at Novgorod and Vladimir. It is associated with the name of Rublëv, who is stated to have been a pupil of the Byzantine painter Theophanes, a most notable artist. Theophanes worked at Kiev, I believe, but Rublëv was active both in the neighbourhood of Moscow and Novgorod. I first came across the Novgorod School in the Tretyakov Gallery at Moscow, in which a certain amount of space is given to a small and representative collection of early Russian paintings. Three little pictures in a corner vividly attracted my attention. They had been perfectly cleaned and revealed in admirable condition. In one there were four standing figures, evidently conceived like wall-paintings on a large scale. Though they were very small on the panel, they conveyed a sense of size and dignity. One was wearing vestments decorated with black and white crosses, and there was a female Saint in a rich red robe. Their heads were somewhat over-large, as one often finds



in Byzantine pictures of the thirteenth century. The whole little group of pictures shone out with a striking mosaic of colour and excelled in rhythmic delicacy of line. The faces were absolutely calm, with no trace of emotion, but the linear scheme was obviously emotional, producing a vivid effect of life and feeling.

In the Alexander III Museum, at Petersburg, there is a large collection of icons, which have been cleaned, and are lucidly hung according to schools and periods. The earliest Byzantine icons there exhibited are curiously like the encaustic portrait-busts of Roman date whereof so considerable a number have come to light in recent years out of Egypt. A precious series of Byzantine pictures of the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth centuries may here be studied, as well as a number of icons from Mount Athos, with which we are not now concerned, but I cannot pass over unmentioned a wonderful fragment of fourteenth-century embroidery from Constantinople, a half-length Virgin and Child, still brilliant in the colour of its silks, and of extraordinary merit and rarity. There is also hung among the pictures a lovely little relief in gold—a Madonna of the twelfth century, mounted in an elaborately arabesqued frame, with tiny busts of saints in circles, and four large jewels held by golden claws. It is only in the studios of Constantinople that work of this perfect quality was produced.

A room filled with Greek pictures of what is called the Italo-Byzantine School produced a splendid decorative effect, though the pictures themselves are



seldom individually of any very great merit. This collection was made in Italy, and has been brought together to show, not so much the similarity as the divergency between the schools of Eastern art which flourished in Russia, and simultaneously elsewhere. There was a large manufacture of such works at Venice, though there could not have been any considerable demand for them in Italy. It appears that they were made for export to Macedonia, the Balkan countries, Asia Minor, and wherever the Greek Church existed. Numbers of them date from the fifteenth century, and their manufacture continued down to the seventeenth and even the eighteenth century. A Nativity of the fifteenth century showed a wonderful mixture of landscape of European type and very Italian women. A small triptych is signed Nicolas Zafvri. That displays a strange mingling of Byzantine and Bellinesque traditions. I also noticed a painting which I can best describe as an Orientalized version of a Gentile da Fabriano.

It is only after passing through these rooms that one comes to the collection of works of the Novgorod School. I have seldom entered a room in any picture gallery in which so rich an impression is produced by walls covered solely with pictures in close proximity one to another. Entirely apart from their significance as paintings and regarded as merely so much decorated surface, I thought there was almost nothing to desire. The colours used were relatively

few and simple, but they harmonized very perfectly together, by however many different artists the pictures may have been painted. I shall not weary the reader by any attempt to describe even the most important of these pictures, still less to recite a catalogue of them. Of course, the Byzantine influence was widely prevalent, some of the Saints being, in reality, the images of patrician Byzantine youths. One side of the room is entirely filled with an iconostasis of about 1,500 from St. Sophia's at Novgorod, but not all the panels originally belonged to the structure. The bottom row has been completed with other works of the same school.

It was not, however, here in this gallery that the high attainment of Novgorod artists most emphatically impressed itself upon me, but, rather, in the Trinity Church, in the Troitskaya Lavra, near Moscow, of which I shall have more to say hereafter. I was accompanied, on that occasion, by two gentlemen who were as enthusiastic as they were learned lovers of early Russian painting. One of them had raised high my expectations by the warmth of his own joyous expectations of once again seeing a certain panel which had passed through his hands, and which he could never behold often enough. He caused the guardians to go before us and throw wide open the door of the little church. Sunlight poured in from some hidden window and filled the interior with light, and through the door as I approached I could see a single panel of the iconostasis, a jewel of beauty and colour, which instantly arrested my

attention, and remains in my memory as one of the loveliest primitive pictures I have ever beheld.

I ought perhaps to explain that an iconostasis is a great wall of paintings architecturally framed together, reaching from the ground almost to the vaulting, and stretching the full width of the church. It hides the sanctuary and chapels to right and left, and is traversed by three doors very richly decorated and sometimes made of silver or other precious material.

The whole iconostasis in this church, with its several tiers of panels, which contain perhaps a dozen separate pictures each, dates from the fifteenth century, and was almost certainly the work of Rublëv, who is recorded to have been employed at the Lavra at the very time when this iconostasis must have been painted. When all the panels shall have been cleaned, if they equal this one in merit, a great work of art will have been discovered worthy to be put in rivalry with whatever of the same kind and date is famous in the world.

The subject of the panel in question is three angels, apparently seated at a table. I thought they were the angels at the tomb of Christ, but was told that the subject is emblematic of the Trinity, and many examples of it exist. I afterwards saw a few elsewhere. The three angels silhouetted against the light background, which preserves scattered points of the soft gilding against which they were originally relieved, glow in blue and purple and gold, perfect in composition and in the gathering and play of

graceful line by which every form and feature is expressed. No photograph can give an adequate idea of the beauty of this panel. The simplicity of its surpassing charm made a sudden and lasting impression, like the imprint of a die on soft metal, which the passage of time is unlikely to erase from my memory. It should be remarked that in the Novgorod School light backgrounds are common, and the figures stand out dark against the light. Where the backgrounds and halos were of gold it was of a delicate soft tone, and had not the burnished brilliance commonly associated with gold-background pictures. This gold has in almost every case that I have seen flaked away, save for little spots here and there, disclosing a rather creamy ground mellowed by time to a delicious ivory texture.

One or two other panels of this same iconostasis have been cleaned and returned to their place, and I noted down their subjects. One depicted St. Sergius, a half-length figure framed within a dozen small surrounding squares, which charmingly related incidents in his legend. I make no attempt to transfer to the reader the pleasure that came to me during half an hour's examination of these little pictures, because to do so by words alone is, I fear, wholly impossible. Let the three angels stand for him as they stand for me, a typical example of the work of a great artist, perhaps the greatest of a very memorable school.

Other pictures of this school which specially attracted my attention and fixed themselves more

or less definitely in my vagabond memory may be lightly passed in review. Among them were a St. Friday (Parasceve) in a fine red robe full facing against a gold background; a Pantocrator between white-robed St. James and St. Nicholas against a red ground. Another St. Nicholas, a half-length dating from about 1400, is good work of the time of Rublëv. There is also a splendidly decorative half-length St. John framed within a border of those little pictures in squares which exemplify the entertaining gifts of narration possessed by many early Russian painters. Of Rublëv's school also is another version of the Three Angels at a table, but it does not rise to the high level of the Troitskaya example. There are two remarkable Crucifixions, one large, one very small, in which the figures are slender and rhythmically outlined. Some of these pictures, even those of fourteenth-century date, show evident signs of Italian influence, but no one could tell me by what agency it was brought to bear. I thought I could trace it in a very small roundel in pink with three angels looking down upon it from above, and a Trinity within the circle skilfully outlined with an intricate tracery of delicate gold lines. All these pictures are in the Alexander III Museum.

A later artist of the school's declining years was one Dionysius, who in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries painted both at Novgorod and Moscow, and decorated the monastery of Ferapont (Therapon). The monastery is due east of Petersburg and due



north of Moscow. The aforesaid Museum can show a John Baptist and several other pictures either by him or of his school. Finer than any of them is a great picture by the Master himself of SS. Peter and Alexis against a light background and surrounded with incidents depicted within squares. These little pictures are full of charm, the groups delightfully composed, the outlines delicate, and the colours flat and harmonious. I saw this icon in the restoration studio at Moscow. There are many examples of such large full-length figures of Saints, rows of them being a common feature in iconostases. They are for the most part boldly painted to produce their effect at a distance. The restorers were skilfully revealing a fine fifteenth-century set from the Annunciation Cathedral.

✓ As the Novgorod-Vladimir School rapidly declined, that of Moscow, Tver, and Central Russia developed, and we pass into rooms devoted to it, with icons depicting multitudes of figures on a small scale, often painted with minutest delicacy and sometimes producing a collective effect very satisfactory to the eye. An artist named Procopius Chirin is here represented as the father of tiny multitudes. Before long the school begins to betray the influence of Persian miniature painting and becomes orientalized. Nicephorus Savin was an artist thus affected. In Moscow the Tsars employed many artists in an Imperial workshop. This school was specially active in the seventeenth century, and its works are often very



miniature-like and Persian. We now encounter an artist whose reputation has not had to be revived, for it has never faded into complete oblivion. I refer to Simon Ushakov, who worked in the time of the Tsar Alexis Michaelovitch. Signed and dated pictures by him are comparatively well known in Moscow churches. Already in his day that Western influence was beginning to creep in which transformed Russia in and after the time of Peter the Great. Thus Ushakov painted a Head of Christ which shows definite connection with the type invented by John Van Eyck.

✓ The Stroganov School was a branch of that of Moscow. There is a room full of its works in the Alexander III Museum. In its pictures the figures are on a small scale and much gold is employed. The skies are often fantastic and on the ground plants and flowers are whimsically introduced to a decorative end. I saw no picture of this school which could rival the work of earlier centuries, but they possessed decorative value.

✓ The Yaroslav School of the seventeenth century need not delay us. The room devoted to it produces a poor effect after the splendours of those others through which we have passed. It continued its activity down to and after the time of Peter the Great. Thenceforward purely Russian art lost its vitality. European influences flooded in, and icon painting, though it was continued down to the present day, ceased to be of any importance in the long chain of art history.

#### IV

### THE CROWN JEWELS

One memorable day at Moscow I was taken to a building in the city, the name of which I have forgotten, where I was received by the directors of the treasury of the Hermitage Museum and several other officials. They took me to an inner chamber and set me down in a comfortable chair at a large table covered with a green cloth. I was encouraged to light my pipe. There was a big chest against a wall. When this was opened it displayed a number of neat wooden boxes of different sizes and forms. One of these was taken out, unlocked, and the contents placed in my hands.

It was the Crown of All the Russias—I suppose, the most splendid piece of jewellery existing in the world. Its sudden, unexpected apparition produced an overwhelming effect; I can best describe it as an oval sphere about the size of a small football encrusted with diamonds. It is not, of course, a continuous sphere, but it is built up on a foundation ring, with a great arch from front to back; and two hollow side pieces almost rising to this arch. Two rows of large and perfect pearls flank the ridge, which is sur-

mounted by a great, upstanding ruby, carrying the Imperial Eagle. The ruby is not cut to facets, but merely polished, and varies considerably in thickness, so that it affords much play of colour. There is a large diamond in front of the brow, and there are a great multitude of diamonds, large and small, ranged about the whole in various designs. It is a most resplendent object.

I am not an expert in jewels, and I am, of course, quite incapable of estimating the quality of the stones or comparing their age as displayed by the cutting. This, however, is the less necessary, as the crown has often been fully described, and specialists in these matters know where to turn for information. I am told that the value of the diamonds is less than an amateur like myself would probably imagine. The stones are not all of the first water, but whether the effect of the whole would be materially different if they were I am inclined to doubt.

Certainly, upon me the effect produced was overwhelming. I have, of course, never before had the opportunity of beholding at such close quarters, and turning round and examining in detail, any object at all comparable to it in value, nor was it merely the multitude and magnificence of the diamonds that impressed me, but the delicacy of the workmanship of the mounts that held them and wrought them into graceful designs. The ruby came from Pekin in 1672. It was not set in the crown when first made for Catherine II, as one can see in several portraits of

her, in which the crown appears in its first state, but it was added during her lifetime. Jérémie Posier, of Geneva, was the jeweller who made it. I am told that he wrote his memoirs, but have been unable to find them. There is no copy in the British Museum.

As thus I sat quietly regarding Catherine's crown there on the green table-cloth, and as I thought of all that it had stood for in the Imperial days, the glitter of the stones for a moment so dazed my eyes that the crown seemed to dissolve into the likeness of a transparent globe, as of water or crystal. Within that I imagined, or rather saw, a great multitude, gorgeously clad, assembled about a kneeling figure in a centre of light. Vague beyond them were the heavy vaults and piers of a cavernous building. All were regarding the crown, from which streamed the light that illuminated them. Thus, perhaps, Sir Galahad beheld the vision of the Holy Grail, "all over covered with a luminous cloud." The dream vanished in the flight of a moment, and there was the crown again on the table before me, no longer the emblem of the greatest power over millions of men ever wielded by a single human being, but a mere construction of metal and stones, a bauble from which all virtue and meaning have utterly departed, a thing for craftsmen to criticise, experts to value, historians to record, and sightseers to glance at in passing. The Holy Grail at Genoa is a broken vessel of green glass, and the crown of all the Russias has become a museum exhibit. *Sic transit gloria mundi.*

The next object that I was shown was the crown of the wife of the Tsar Paul I. After the great Imperial crown this seemed a relatively small affair. It is an oval variation of the other, and, like that, wholly encrusted with diamonds. They are smaller in average dimension, but they are beautifully grouped and arranged, and I am not sure whether for actual beauty this crown is not superior to the other. Catherine II's golden orb came next, with a diamond-set belt around its equator. A smaller semi-circle rises from it and passes over the pole. A large diamond was added later. The pole is distinguished by a beautiful sapphire, surmounted by a cross.

After this the golden sceptre of Catherine II was placed in my hands. It is a graceful rod, with the stem curving slightly in outline and surrounded here and there by circlets of diamonds; but the glory of the sceptre is the great diamond at the top, above which rises the double eagle in enamel and crowned with brilliants. The great diamond was given to Catherine II by Prince Orlov, and is a world-renowned stone. In form and size it may be roughly compared to a rather large pigeon's egg with one end cut off. Though far from being the largest, it is one of the finest diamonds in the world. It is rose-cut, the base being a cleavage face. It weighs  $194\frac{1}{4}$  carats.

The story goes that it formed one of the eyes of the statue of Brahma which stood in a temple in Sheringham Island, in the Caverry river, near Trichinopili,



in Mysore. A French soldier in the eighteenth century stole it, having got himself appointed guardian of the temple. He sold it for £2,000 to the captain of an English ship, who for £12,000 parted with it to a London jeweller. Raphael Khojeh, a Persian merchant, was its next owner, and it was from him that Prince Orlov bought it in 1791 for £90,000 and an annuity of £4,000—so it is said. Orlov gave it to Catherine II. The above account is traditional, but far from certain. It is also stated that Orlov bought it in 1775, and some claim that it is, in fact, the Great Mogul diamond, whose fate is unknown.

Many of the portraits of Catherine II represent her as wearing a great collar, or, rather, necklace, of the Order of St. Andrew. This consists of an alternating circular design, displaying eagles or monograms, and carrying a star and wide-spreading pendant all in open work covered with diamonds. After long and careful examination of these Imperial insignia there followed a succession of ornaments which have left rather a blurred impression on my memory. First came some hair ornaments in rows of diamonds, then a beautiful head-dress made for the wife of Alexander I, and wrought into the likeness of a bouquet of ears of corn and sprigs covered with brilliants with a big diamond in the centre, the whole trembling and dancing in one's hand. This seemed to me a most lovely object. Another trembling ornament for the hair or corsage, mounted on a double



pin, carried two large sapphires and many smaller ones. Then there was a beautiful feather of about the year 1800, all sprayed over with diamonds, with small sapphires on the stem and others at the end. I also remember a specially beautiful jewelled imitation of narcissus-flowers, made up with yellow diamonds for their centres, white diamonds for the petals, and enamelled green stems carrying these flowers. Of earlier date, about 1750, is a set of ornaments for head and corsage, a very elaborate construction of garnets and diamonds, perhaps to be described as more splendid than beautiful. I was also shown the great sword made for Alexander I, when Grand Duke, with hilt and guard as it were wound round with diamond cords in spirals.

The boxes thus opened were a minor proportion of those contained in the great chest. I saw many more things than I have thus attempted so inadequately to describe, but, frankly, after an hour or two, I had seen enough. Gold and precious stones impress by their rarity and their value. When such a multitude are placed in one's hands or passed in review before one's eyes, the time comes when the sense of rarity vanishes, and one begins to think of jewels as common things. I see I have forgotten to mention the pearl necklaces, one of which at least is to be remembered as among the most remarkable in the world, though I am afraid that the pearls have lost a good deal of their lustre. I am told however that modern skill avails to skin such dulled pearls

and to give them back all their lustre, but who again is ever to wear this necklace, and what ceremonial occasions are likely to arise at which it could fitly be worn? It will probably rest in its case along with all the other treasures, memorials of a bygone day and a vanished society.

A report, widely spread, and very generally believed, stated that all these Crown jewels had been sold, and many of them broken up into their constituent parts. Possibly the question of selling them may have arisen, and inquiries may have been set on foot. About this I know nothing, and asked nothing. The important fact is that no sale was effected. It is likely enough that jewels confiscated from private owners may have been sold in the markets of the world. Of this also I know nothing, and about it I made no inquiry. I have been asked about this and the other particular ornament known to have been among the Imperial jewels. A set of emeralds was mentioned, and a blue diamond now claimed to be in Paris. I know nothing about the emeralds, nor have I any note or remembrance of seeing a blue diamond. I have made inquiries with the following result.

The only blue diamond the history of which is known is the "Hope," but there are various legends attached to that. The "Hope" diamond has been known since 1830, when it was bought for £18,000. It is supposed to be part of a large blue diamond fetched from India by Tavernier in 1642, which passed

into the possession of Louis XIV. It weighed 112 carats. It was cut down into a stone weighing about  $67\frac{3}{8}$  carats, and this remained among the Crown jewels down to the French Revolution. No similar blue diamond was seen until the "Hope" appeared in 1830. Three blue diamonds are still supposed to exist, and to be parts of the stone bought by Tavernier. The stone that Louis XIV wore is supposed to be the same as the "Hope." The other stones weigh approximately  $1\frac{3}{4}$  and  $13\frac{3}{4}$  carats. The smaller has been identified in the possession of an English family. The other may belong to a French lady, Mademoiselle Suzanne Thullier; but it was in her possession before the Russian Revolution.

None of these three was ever in the possession of the Russian Crown. Broadly speaking, I saw quite enough to warrant me in assuring the interested public that the important Crown jewels of Russia remain safe in the keeping of the present Government. Indeed, if I may give expression to a rather vague feeling which I experienced, it is that the sense of public ownership of objects of historical interest or of actual or imagined value is even stronger, not merely with the Government but with the people of Russia, than it is in most other countries. The museums are fierce protectors of their collections, and apparently defend even trifling objects, not merely against the would-be purchasers but against one another. Thus the Hermitage at Petersburg possesses upwards of forty paintings by Rembrandt,

many of them, though not all, of supreme quality. The museums at Moscow lack Rembrandts, and would like to obtain two or three from Petersburg. The matter has given rise to an almost insurmountable difficulty.

I have attempted to give some idea of the multitude of icons of all dates that have come into the possession of the State. It is obvious that there are far more than can ever be usefully displayed in Russian museums. I suggested that a representative collection would be a desirable addition to our own National Gallery, and though my suggestion was not absolutely pooh-poohed, I could see that such a transfer, however richly compensated, would involve a great wrench. For these reasons I feel some confidence that the treasures of Russia are in safe hands, and that lovers of art may rest satisfied with their present situation.

## CATHEDRALS AND THE KREMLIN

St. Basil's stands free at an end of the great Red Square of Moscow. Down one long side of the Square runs the battlemented brick wall of the Kremlin diversified by three great gateway-towers of fantastic and varied design. The far end is blocked by an ugly modern building—the Historical Museum—on either side of which are entries to the Square. The fourth side is formed by the great grey GUM, a row of commercial buildings once a sort of bazaar and now employed commercially by the Government in ways about which I neither asked nor know anything. On my arrival in Moscow I was met at the station by some kindly officials with a car, who took me about the city, intending the drive to culminate in a dramatic entrance into this great and wonderful Square; but unfortunately we could not at that particular moment have entry, as the funeral of Mr. Nogin, the Director of Textile Manufactures, was just then taking place.

It is intended to bury the Revolutionary leaders in a row all along beneath the Kremlin wall. Lenin's tomb is already there, a temporary structure of wood which I find a difficulty in describing. It is rather



a large low building massively panelled in a fashion that strongly reminded me of a Fourth Dynasty Egyptian sarcophagus. The resemblance is not wholly fortuitous because the Egyptian type was intended to imitate a contemporary wooden building, and the forms of Lenin's monument are likewise directly borrowed from old Russian wooden architecture. Above this flat-topped oblong building there rises a smaller rectangular mass which may be intended as a cenotaph or even as a base for a sarcophagus. Lenin's body was not in or upon this shrine, but away in the hands of embalmers and chemists. Meanwhile the monument serves as a central rallying place for processions and celebrations while designers are competitively at work preparing an ultimate permanent memorial. Of the funeral rites I saw nothing, but only processions converging on the Red Square, and some of them singing as they marched.

The day I went to visit St. Basil's another celebration was going on, for the Soviet authorities are experts in crowd-psychology and realize the greater importance of stimulating crowd emotion than of convincing individual intelligence. I wish I had had time to study their methods of crowd propaganda, for I am convinced that they are unusually efficient. This time I came alone and approached from the river side, thus first catching sight of St. Basil's at the top of the rather steep incline of the Vasilevskaya which leads up from the bank to the Kremlin plateau.





LENIN'S TOMB BESIDE THE KREMLIN WALL.

III  
IV  
V  
VI

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Thus beheld, in bright sunlight, with its clump of fantastically shaped and coloured domes, illuminated against a radiant sky, the effect of the building as it burst into view was almost magical. Though complex it is not confused, its structural unity and purpose being evident.

It was only begun in 1554, in the time of Ivan the Terrible, yet, like other Russian sixteenth-century buildings, it has an aspect of great antiquity, for Russia in the sixteenth century was on about the same plane as England at the time of the Norman Conquest, and Russian architecture of that day possesses the massiveness, the rudimentariness of structure, and the heavy simplicity in effective decoration which belong to the work of early civilizations. At Kiev and Novgorod the ancient churches are purely Byzantine, erected from Greek designs and by Greek master craftsmen. St. Basil's and the Kremlin Cathedrals—but above all St. Basil's—are Russian in design, in technique, in decoration, and in spirit. Here you have the real voice of Russia, forgetful of Greece and untrammelled by Western influence.

If St. Basil's reminds one of any other architecture it is Indian rather than Byzantine, Saracenic, or Turkish. Some of the domes with their twisted parti-coloured details are like turbans. The orientally battlemented Kremlin wall close by is likewise outlandish. The Kremlin towers resemble no others in the world. You can find in them Gothic, Renaissance, and other elements, but the combination is altogether

original and every borrowed detail is treated with perfect freedom and a wonderful fertility of invention. St. Basil's, in fact, stands as much alone as does St. Mark's of Venice. You may identify the pedigree of its parts, but the whole is a new thing, unique, and most memorable among the chosen buildings in the world. The names of its architects, Barma and Postnik, deserve to be remembered. Time has dealt kindly with their work. The splashing of colour which covers it all over, predominantly brick red and green, is as fantastic and as pleasing as a Persian shawl, mellowed of course and beautified by the action of time.

As I wandered round its massive stone base, looking now upward to the domes, now away to the Kremlin's red walls, bells were ringing, bands were playing and one procession after another was emerging into the Red Square and being massed in order about the tomb of Lenin beneath the forest of red flags they were carrying. These processions are a strange sight. They kept arriving up the Ilinka Street in groups of trades, occupations, clubs and what-not. Groups were singing as they marched, some mechanically and rather drearily, a few passionately like men exalted in religious ecstasy. They were marshalled by leaders of whom some were naked to the waist and bare-headed—Rousseau-like returning to Nature! Presently a rather shabby set of individuals came straggling out of the Kremlin by the Spasskiya Gate, near which I had taken up an almost solitary position.

I was told that they were representatives of "the Party"—the organized group of some 300,000 persons who run the Soviet Government and were at this time assembled in Congress. They were received with rather feeble cheers and disappeared from my view in the neighbourhood of Lenin's monument. On the outskirts of the crowd were street-vendors of strawberries, cakes, rolls, neckties, socks, tooth-picks, cigarettes, shoes, sponges, loafahs, needles and thread, buttons, a pair of opera-glasses, sunflower seeds, pocket mirrors, Soviet signs and buttons, photographs, bootlaces, and so forth. One operator was nailing on the loosened heel of a woman's shoe. There were also a good many beggars. It was all very strange to a West European eye; it was also profoundly orderly. I saw no uniformed police and no soldiers, but there was a sense of iron discipline beneath the visible surface of things.

From this animated and sunlit scene I entered the twilight of St. Basil's. The door was unlocked for me and closed again, for the building is in the hands of cleaners and only a chapel beneath it is available for worship. The interior is best to be described as cavernous and labyrinthine. There are eight little chapels grouped about the central church, which also is very small. Each of these nine chambers is prolonged upwards in a kind of tube and surmounted by a dome. They are connected by low vaulted passages in the thickness of the very thick walls and there is a vaulted passage all round. There are



various forms of arched doorways, all different, all deeply recessed and as roughly fashioned as an Anglo-Saxon village church. The building is partly of stone, partly of brick, both thickly stuccoed over and everywhere painted in colours once crude but now mellowed by time. All the forms are crude, but they go well with the massive, irregular architecture. There are many engaged columns flanking doors and other openings with strange pudding-like mouldings copied from contemporary wooden structures. The firing of a salute sounded muffled within the massive small-windowed walls; the music of the bands was faint and far away.

The iconostasis has been badly repainted. When cleaned it will show the handiwork of seventeenth-century artists. It was brought hither from the Kremlin. Some panels scattered through the chapels belong to an earlier iconostasis and suggest that they may hide good paintings beneath a later skin. Old icons of the Virgin and the Head of Christ are typically dignified. The painted pulpits are almost Saracenic in effect. A fine cloth of Persian gold damask covered the square altar in the sanctuary and some pieces of old velvet enriched the scene. The many hanging lamps when lit must be very decorative in the gloom. We descended steps and came to iron doors locked with a heavy padlock which had to be long and laboriously unwound, but the treasures once here preserved are now in the Kremlin and only a good sixteenth-century icon or two and a richly em-



broidered cover, made for the grave of St. Basil in the time of John the Terrible's son, remain with other unimportant objects. If the present contents of the church are of little interest, the building itself is a priceless treasure. Gladly would I have lingered long within it, but in Moscow there is much to see and time was limited; I was unwillingly forced to leave St. Basil's before it had told me half its mysterious and romantic tale.

We entered the Kremlin by the Spasskiya Gate and came on the great Parade with the Nicholas Palace behind us, the tower of Ivan Veliki, the great bell at its foot, and the Archangel Cathedral all on our right hand. A wide and wonderful view over the Moskva River and the town with its many golden domes and peopled distances spread away before us. Soldiers were playing football on the drill ground. The best view was to be had from the little cloister beyond it which used to surround an equestrian statue of Alexander II. This has been removed, not because it commemorated a Tsar but because it was a bad work of art. The vault within the arcade is well decorated with mosaic medallion bust portraits of the Tsars.

Passing round the Archangel Cathedral we came to a small irregular paved square with a Cathedral on each of three of its sides and open to the view on the fourth. Though so small they are truly cathedrals, as also is St. Basil's; but few indeed can have been the persons present within them on the occasion of

great ceremonials. Turning our backs on the view, the Blagoveshchenski or Annunciation Cathedral was on our left. Here the Tsars were christened and married. The Uspenski or Assumption Cathedral in which the Tsars were crowned was in front of us. On our right hand was the Archangel Cathedral where the Tsars before Peter the Great are buried. We turned first toward the last of these. It was locked up and the lock was sealed. The seal, having been examined and found intact, was broken by the bearer of a load of antique and heavy keys who opened the many locks and bars of the doors and enabled us to enter. My companions and guides were Mr. Dmitri Ivanov, Director of the Kremlin Museum, and the learned Mr. Shebanov, who knows more about Slav manuscripts than any other person living. A heavy silence seemed to fall upon us within. Gone is the last echo of the full-toned choir of popes and priests that used to thrill every worshipper and even every casual visitor that came hither in the days that are now so irrevocably vanished.

The aspect of the church as one enters is very different from that of St. Basil's. One does not here burrow into a labyrinth of small chapels. The interior is in effect a single chamber domed over with cupolas supported on four great piers. The contrast is explained when we learn that here the architect was the Italian Alevisio Novi of Milan, whereas St. Basil's was designed and built by Russians. It is not however the architecture that

attracts the first attention of a visitor, but the chaos of pictures and wall-paintings and the strange assemblage of graves. There are forty-seven sarcophagi ranged close together, side by side, in groups. All are encased in bronze and glass cases, one like another, within which the stone tombs can but dimly be discerned. There is decorative sculpture upon them and there are inscriptions, but through the glass and in the dim light the detail escapes discovery. All these modern boxes are to be removed and order is to be brought into the existing chaos; but this will take time.

The wall-paintings have been gaudily overpainted again and again, even in recent times. "Like all uncultured people," wrote Théophile Gautier, "the Russians prefer what is new, or, at least, what seems so, and they believe that they manifest respect for their ancient buildings in renewing their painted dress as soon as it is in the least degree frayed or ravelled. They are the greatest whitewashers in the world. Nor do they stop short at the old Byzantine frescoes which adorn the inside and even the exterior of their churches, but repaint them at once as soon as the colours begin to grow dull, so that these pictures, solemnly antique and primitively barbaric as they seem, are often restorations of yesterday. It is not uncommon to see some ordinary house-painter perched aloft on a frail scaffolding retouching a Madonna with all the tranquillity of a monk of Mount Athos."

That was in 1858. The wall-paintings are now to be stripped of this disfigurement. Already immense scaffoldings have been erected and skilful cleaners have begun their work. The repaints are being tenderly removed and the ancient pictures and decorations are coming to light, many of them in a remarkable state of preservation. As they belong to the good period of Russian art their recovery is important. The wall-paintings include portraits of those buried beneath. Over each grave is the owner's best icon. The tombs of Ivan the Terrible and his two sons were specially pointed out—one slain by his father, the other by Boris Godunov. The thirteenth-century St. Michael, Prince of Chernigov, slain by the Mongols, rests in a silver coffin, the gift of Catherine II. All these objects are crowded together and there is little standing room. The Patriarch's rather ugly throne has to be squeezed in. I noted a great gold processional disc or flabelum and a number of flags, but the general impression left on my mind is one of confusion, mainly the product of nineteenth-century bad taste. When the rubbish is cleared away the church will recover distinction and the treasures it contains will emerge.

Crossing the courtyard we next entered the Uspenski or Assumption Cathedral. This was built in 1475-9 by Fioraventi of Bologna on the model of the twelfth-century Cathedral at Vladimir. The nave is a square with a domed roof supported on four massive piers. The vermilion-coloured icono-

stasis of pierced carving, enclosing five rows of painted panels, fills the side opposite the entrance, but has been stripped of its modern jewelled decorations. It was thus described by Théophile Gautier in 1858 :

“ The iconostasis, a lofty wall of gilded silver which looks like the façade of some golden palace, is absolutely dazzling with fabulous magnificence. Through apertures in the goldsmith’s work appear the brown heads and hands of Madonnas, and of male and female saints. Their aureoles in relief, catching the light, sparkle with the facets of the precious stones set in their rays, and flame like real glories ; to those pictures which are regarded with special veneration, are fastened breast-plates, collars, and bracelets, starred with diamonds, sapphires, rubies, emeralds, amethysts, pearls, turquoises ; the madness of pious luxury seems here to have reached its height. Doubtless this luxury must seem slightly barbaric to a refined taste, fonder of beauty than of opulence ; but it is not to be denied that these accumulations of gold, these diamonds and pearls, produce a religious and splendid effect. These madonnas—whose jewels are more costly than those of queens and empresses—are most imposing to the simple worshipper. In this half-obscurity, by the vague light of lamps, they assume a supernatural radiance. Their diamond crowns scintillate like crowns of stars.”

Behind the iconostasis are the sanctuary and



chapels. The whole enclosed space is small. All the walls and domes are entirely covered with paintings. The piers were being cleaned and old paintings disclosed. A mass of scaffolding erected to that end filled the place. A low carpeted platform between the piers is the site of the coronations. On the embossed doors of the sanctuary are some very fine icons, but little of the valuable original fittings remains, for the church was thoroughly looted by the French in 1812. The Patriarch's throne is under a stone canopy resembling those in St. Mark's at Venice. A wooden canopy made for Ivan the Terrible covers the Tsar's seat. It is carved with reliefs illustrating Russian legendary history. Russian wood-carvings are very rare and these are some of the best. I noted particularly the icon of "Christ with burning eyes"—a work of the twelfth century which has been skilfully cleaned; it is of course Byzantine in type. Near the entrance are groups of tombs of seventeenth-century Patriarchs. One is of silver and is very ugly.

The Annunciation Cathedral, also a fifteenth-century building, was in the hands of workmen and was not at the moment accessible.

Beside the Cathedrals and the various towers and gates there is little of architectural interest to delay a visitor to the Kremlin. I had occasion to enter the former Court of Justice, now the office of the Executive Committee of the Soviets. A rather curious notice-board attracted my attention. It



contained announcements of 1st of May celebrations. These were typed or printed and grouped about with silhouette figures and various designs, as well as with mementoes of May-day festivities in old days. The whole was patched together in a kind of Cubist fashion. In another part of the building I came across a most peculiar box for the collection of opinions and suggestions. The box was neither rectangular nor of any other symmetrical form nor was it placed horizontally, but fastened sloping-wise against a board. On that were painted or attached various arms ending in questions and there were other peculiar shapes. The effect of the whole was undoubtedly good, but I see that it is impossible for me to translate it into words. I think the opinions invited were to be about some theatrical performance given in the great domed hall built by Catherine II.

The only part of the great Kremlin Palace accessible during my visit to Moscow was the Oruzheynaya Paláta, but that was really the only part I was seriously anxious to see. It contains a Museum of great importance, and I must now endeavour to give the reader some idea of it because the rumour was widely spread that many of the treasures it contained were destroyed or scattered abroad. Arms and armour are the core of the collection. There is the thirteenth-century helmet of the father of Russia's national hero and Saint, Alexander Nevski, who defeated the Swedes on the Neva (whence his name)

and the Knights of the Teutonic Order on the ice of Lake Peipus. Even earlier (of the twelfth century) and rarer is a helmet, probably made in Constantinople, cylindrical below, conical above, all inlaid with gold and silver threads fashioning angels round the drum and arabesques elsewhere. There are unique Mongolian masks of iron fixed below round caps. Of John the Terrible and especially of that beloved son of his who died of a blow from his afterward broken-hearted father's hand there are many relics—a complete suit of armour for horse and man, a delicately embossed Italian helmet; another given by the same father to his three-year-old boy, a conically pointed thing whose form has been borrowed for the caps of the Soviet troops. It is beautifully finished and inscribed in gold. There is just one other like it at Stockholm. Boris Godunov's massive coat of mail expresses the magnitude of his body. I was bidden to observe how skilfully the old Russians imitated oriental metalwork, copying, like the Poles, Persian swords and decorated scabbards. A case full of real Persian arms and helmets of the sixteenth century, all delicately inlaid with gold, might have repaid minute and protracted examination, but I must hurry on here as everywhere in this wild rush through Muscovite Museums. I can but mention a quantity of Turkish and Russian armour of parade, while the reader will have to imagine for himself the rest of three great beflagged rooms filled with mounted suits

and cases of armour (Peter the Great's and other Tsars) grouped about the floor and covering the walls, to most of which some tradition or record is attached.

A score or so of thrones are scattered about these galleries. There is the ivory throne of Ivan the Great, the real founder of the Russian Empire (1462-1505), which his wife Sophia, niece of Constantine Palaeologus, brought to Moscow. It was altered and spoilt in the seventeenth century. There is the throne of the Tsar Alexis (1659), adorned with 876 flat diamonds and 1,223 other precious stones. There is also the throne which Shah Abbas gave to Boris Godunov in 1604; it is covered with thin plates of gold and studded with 2,200 jewels. Then there are crowns galore, beginning with that of Vladimir Monomakh, Grand Prince of Kiev, who married English Harold's sister. That is a treasure of immeasurable price, for it is probably Byzantine work of the best time, an eight-sided ring adorned with flower designs in the most delicate golden filigree. The top and jewels were added some centuries later. There are the crowns of John the Terrible, of the first Romanov Tsar, two of Peter the Great, as well as the crowns of Kazan (1553), of Siberia (1659), and of Georgia. Orbs, sceptres, and other ceremonial emblems accompany them and all blaze with jewels and glitter with gold. Coronation robes fill many cases. There are also episcopal headgear which I can scarcely call mitres, but splendid as they may have looked at a distance, they do not

enter into comparison with the crowns. Vestments of corresponding elaboration likewise find place; they date back to the fourteenth century.

Of reliquaries I will name but three. Oldest is a Byzantine example, which can be dated 1148. In form it copies the ciborium of St. Demetrius in Salonica and on it are the figures of Constantine Dukas and his wife. This was rescued from the Treasury of the Patriarchs on the Kremlin, one of the very few buildings that suffered pillage during the Revolution. Half of the binding of a very splendid book adorned with big jewels was likewise rescued, but the other half has doubtless passed through the melting-pot. It was not of historical or much artistic value. Another small reliquary of the thirteenth century, Byzantine in style but Russian in workmanship, is beautifully engraved and enamelled. It contains a double cross with the embossed figure of a saint at the foot. The third reliquary was for carrying in processions. It was made in the fifteenth century for Ivan III. It imitates the form of a building in Romanesque style crowned by a cupola. Figures in high relief are contained within a surrounding arcade under trefoil pediments and there are handles attached for convenience of carriage.

My notes contain descriptions of a longer list of icons than the reader can be expected to tolerate. I regarded in their case more the splendour of the settings in gold and jewels than the quality of the



THE BYZANTINE CROWN OF VLADIMIR MONOMAKH.



A 12TH CENT. BYZANTINE HELMET.



HELMET OF THE SON OF  
JOHN THE TERRIBLE.

*All three are in the Kremlin.*





paintings, whereof so many more can be studied in the picture galleries I have elsewhere cited. The great Byzantine golden icon of 1408 from the Uspenski Cathedral is considered the most splendid in Russia. Tradition carries the picture back to a remote antiquity. A thirteenth-century gold-covered icon is adorned with figures of Christ and Saints across the top and decorative designs all in repoussé. There are other Byzantine examples of great rarity and a number of later ones of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries decorated with the delicate and tasteful enamels then so prolifically produced in Russian Imperial and ecclesiastical workshops.

What shall I say more of crosses and censers, of Gospels and golden bindings set with gems, of censers and chalices, whereof a whole case-full had recently come from suppressed monasteries and other foundations? I could tell of ivory sticks used by Tsars and ivory crutches the badge of abbots and metropolitans, including that of the masterful Patriarch Nikon who tried a fall with the Tsar Alexis and retired into a monastery discomfited. These and countless like treasures must be passed undescribed, but I shall not be forgiven if I fail to introduce the reader to the room full of silver-plate, the like of which is gathered together in no other single room in the world, unless it be in the Hermitage. Let me mention first in date a silver bowl of the twelfth century, and a Caucasian silver aquamanile in the form of a horseman of the same period. Though restored

in parts it is an almost unique treasure. Let me seize also this moment to name and pass by the "Old Ryazán Treasure," which dates from some uncertain time before the Tartar invasions. It includes a number of roundels set with cabuchon stones and filigree and five pieces enriched with Byzantine enamel figures from the ancient workshops of Kiev.

It is however not upon these antiquities, how precious so ever they may be, that I can now afford to dwell, but rather upon the Renaissance plate with which great glass cases are filled. Most important for us is the vast assemblage of the work of English silversmiths which fills a case the size of a small room. These were the gifts of James I and other English kings to the Russian monarchs, carried by embassies sent to negotiate the opening of a most profitable trade by way of the White Sea. Here are great jugs 3 feet and more in height and endless cups and dishes too vast for actual use, candlesticks and tankards, bottles and cups, salt cellars, silver beasts, and other ornaments which I make no attempt to describe because they are already well-known to those who interest themselves in these matters. On each piece a Russian inscription has been engraved recording the date of the gift. Not a single one of the whole set was lost or even displaced during the Revolution. There are other cases of German silver including huge Nuremberg cups, one 7 feet high, also a case of beautiful nautilus-shell cups and a case of mounted cocoa-nut cups. The

famous Jamnitzers are here duly represented. Augsburg craftsmen have filled a case all to themselves, another is devoted to the plate of Dantzic, another to Hamburg, while there are also numerous contributions assignable to Sweden, Holland, Flanders and elsewhere. The only piece of French plate I noticed was a dish of about 1660 finely embossed, the gift of the English king, Charles I—an exceptionally rare specimen.

Nearly thirty years ago, when I was devoting my summers to the exploration of the previously unknown interior of Spitsbergen and my winters to investigating and writing the history of that then and till recently uninhabited island, I used to be continually intrigued and attracted by references to the Arctic activities of the monks of Solovetski by the shore of the White Sea. It was held to be one of the largest and wealthiest monasteries in Russia and I had nursed a vague intention of some day paying it a visit. Imagine therefore my regret when I heard, during the War or soon after it, that the said monastery had been burnt down. What brought it into my head as I was being shown some of the aforementioned treasures I do not remember, but so it was, and I said without any premeditation, "How I should have liked to see the treasures of Solovetski!" "But you can see them at once," was the reply. "They are all kept together in a room we shall presently come to." And so it proved to be. Though the monastery was burnt, its valuable contents were

all saved and brought to the Kremlin. Most of the precious things belong to the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. They include of course a number of icons, many finely adorned, circular flabella decorated with seraphs, great bookbindings, silver dishes and a cup with a gothic stem made in the convent, and a variety of gifts from Ivan the Terrible. There is a great silver-gilt altar of the year 1700 with a German frontal and much of eighteenth-century silver overlaid with ornament. The vestments are also many, but the most interesting object for me was the wooden tomb of St. Zosima who built the first church in 1436, with his effigy carved in the round in the simplest style of native art. As aforesaid, Russian sculpture in wood is of extreme rarity and this is perhaps the only existing effigy of the school.

Satiated with the sight of so many remarkable objects, wearied out and almost dismayed with the strain of admiration and wonder, I was in no mood on descending to the ground floor of the building to give much attention to the royal beds and the state carriages there gathered together, even though they included a great English coach with panels carved in high relief which was one of the presents sent to Boris Godunov. The reader may perhaps obtain some idea of my fatigue by his own after reading the account which I have striven to write for him.

## VI

### THE TROITSKAYA LAVRA

I do not know exactly what a Lavra is. A Greek Laura was an assemblage of cenobite cells, but a Russian Lavra is something more than that and appears to be a kind of super-monastery. There was one at Kiev, one at Petersburg, and the one now to be described, situated about 44 miles from Moscow. Those were, I believe, the only Lavras in Russia, and they took precedence of all other monasteries. The Troitskaya Lavra, or the Trinity Monastery of St. Sergius, to give it its full name, was, after Kiev, the richest as it was also the most historically important of Russian convents. It was founded by St. Sergius in 1337. It won undying fame by its heroic and victorious resistance during sixteen months to the siege by an army of 30,000 Poles in 1608-9. It was intimately connected with the Imperial House and offered silent retreat to successive Tsars in days preceding their solemn coronation. It was also, down to latest days, the seat of an Academy of Arts, and it was the annual goal of upwards of 100,000 pilgrims. Its wealth was enormous and the contents of its treasury were reputed to be worth 650 million



roubles. Accordingly I was quick to avail myself of the opportunity of visiting this renowned fane and observing how it fares in the hands of the Soviet Government.

In company with the Director of Museums, my secretary, and a learned authority on old Russian art, I travelled by a crowded morning train, slow and often halting, to Sergievo. This was my first experience of a normal modern Russian train. All the carriages were of one class with straight-backed wooden seats and windows only at the doors. The floor was covered with linoleum and the interior was scrupulously clean. Long before we started every seat was occupied and scarcely standing room was available. It was a proletariat crowd, neither rude nor polite, but indifferent; its members were clean and decently dressed in working clothes.

Before we reached Sergievo, the glittering domes and towered, embattled walls of the Lavra came in sight. The gilding that we see in the open air in other countries gives little idea of the brilliance of Russian golden domes. They are covered with plates of copper encrusted with gold which has been fused upon them in a layer far thicker than gold-leaf. This extra thickness produces such visible effect that domes thus treated shine afar almost as though the sun itself were blazing through them. Such are the domes of the Lavra. We walked up from the station through a sort of market-place that clusters along beneath the battlemented monastic wall and close

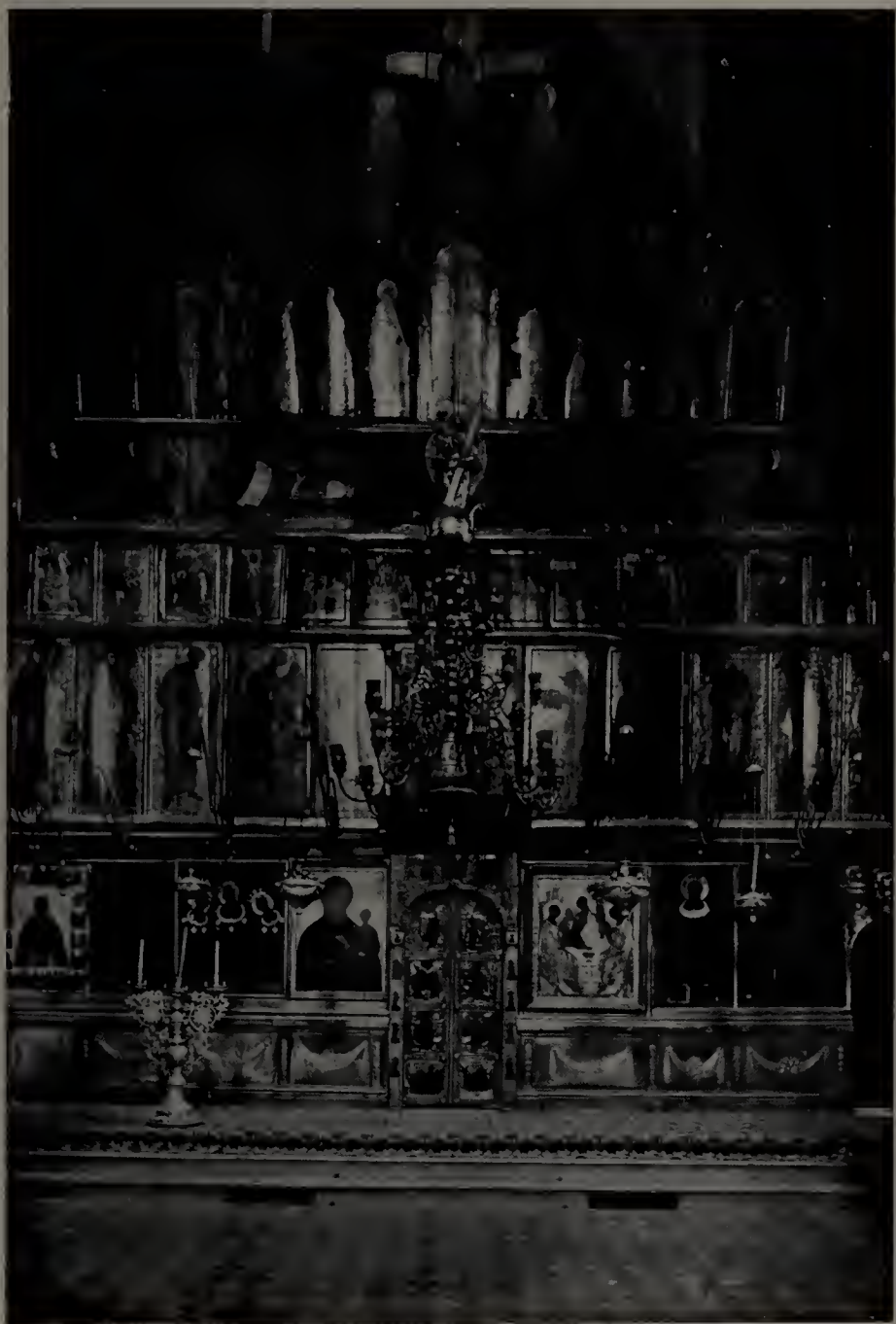


to the market-church. There were booths and carts gathered on both sides of the way, with toys for sale and cheap icons and also farming tools and farm produce and all kinds of things. I have nowhere else in Europe seen so exact a parallel to an Oriental bazaar. Though pilgrims come no longer, the place remains the centre of an agricultural district and continues all its petty trades, whereof toymaking was a speciality.

We turned the great red angle-tower of the fortified enclosure and presently came to a plastered and gaudily painted entrance-gate adorned with coarse Corinthian capitals and blue and white foliated designs. All along the wall was a row of vaults for stabling horses and there were other red towers and whited walls. Passing through the vaulted gateway we came into a pleasant irregular place planted with trees and, right in front of us, a sixteenth-century church with one gold and four blue domes spangled with gold stars. It resembled a cubical cruet-stand with five pepper pots. Round the church is a graveyard and beyond it on the left was the gaily, even gaudily painted Refectory building and on the right an open space with trees and structures dotted about it. These included a sacred wall under a dome, some domed chapels and a lofty rococo tower adorned with much fanciful detail of twisted engaged columns, vine decoration and so forth, and with an elaborate golden ornament at the top.

Continuing our way straight on we advanced toward

the Church of the Trinity, which was our first objective. The core of it is of the fifteenth century, but it is surmounted and surrounded by many later additions. Behind it stands a row of buildings like a college, and there were other churches in sight, but I lost count of them. I am told that in all there are thirteen. The Trinity Church produced a polychrome effect. It has windows flanked by engaged columns and surmounted by fanciful pediments. Round it there runs a frieze as of shells (dated 1693) and the copper roof outjuts and overhangs. It terminates aloft in a small gold dome and a cross. We entered a sixteenth-century antechamber or narthex with painted walls and a rudely fashioned, deeply recessed doorway opening into the church. It was through this door that I obtained the striking view of Rublëv's iconostasis as previously described. The bottom row of panels depicts various subjects, next comes a row of tall figures—the Deësis, Apostles, and Saints ; then a row of half-length prophets and at the top a sixteenth-century row of full-length "Ancestors," beginning with Adam. As aforesaid, all these pictures are to be cleaned and are expected to emerge in good condition—probably the finest fifteenth-century paintings in Russia. The sanctuary doors are of silver-repoussé—highly decorative work of the seventeenth century—with some small figures within silver-gilt and niello frames. Overhanging ornament above the doors is in open-work on a bolder scale and is distinguished by settings of precious



THE ICONOSTASIS IN THE TRINITY CHURCH IN THE TROITSKAYA LAVRA.



stones. The dome is carried by four square silver-angled piers and there are other displays of silver-work at the ends of the iconostasis. A dado of fine embroideries used to hang all round the church and the walls were painted by Rublëv and his assistants. It is hoped that these pictures will re-emerge when the walls are stripped. Altar and canopy within the sanctuary are of silver—rather vulgar eighteenth-century work; there is also a great seven-branched silver candlestick and in a doll's-house behind the altar are a Christ in gold, the Apostles in silver, and a copper Judas. This mere catalogue of a few of the things I noticed among the multitude I saw in the Trinity Church may give the reader some idea of the wealth of one of the many churches within this Lavra.

Théophile Gautier thus described this church as he saw it in pre-Revolution days:

“It was late in the afternoon when we entered the Trinity Cathedral, wherein stands the shrine of St. Sergius. The mysterious darkness enhanced the magnificence of the sanctuary. Along the walls, rows of pictured saints stood up dark against their gold backgrounds, and assumed a strange fierce life. It was like a procession of grave personages outlined darkly against the crest of a hill against a belt of sunset. In corners more obscure, the painted figures were like phantoms watching with their ghostly gaze all that went on within the church. Touched by some wandering ray, an aureole here and there shone

like a star in a dark sky, or gave to some head of bearded saint the aspect of a John the Baptist's head upon the charger of Herodias. The iconostasis, a gigantic façade of gold and precious stones, rose to the vaulted ceiling with its tawny gleams and prismatic scintillations. Near the iconostasis, toward the right, a luminous centre attracted the eye; a great number of lamps helped to make in this corner a very conflagration of gold, and silver-gilt, and silver. It was the shrine of St. Sergius, the humble anchorite, who rests there in a sepulchre richer than that of any emperor. The tomb itself is of gilded silver, supported by four columns of the same metal, the gift of the Empress Anne."

We retired for rest and lunch in a room looking out on trees and a silver-plated dome and listened to the chorus of the countless birds. My host pressed upon me a certain dish. "It is very Russian," he said, "so you must taste it, but like everything that is very Russian it comes from abroad and is in fact of Greek origin." After lunch the Treasury was opened for my inspection. It left a bewildered impression on my mind. I know not how to deal with the dozen closely written sheets of notes which now lie before me. We began with a number of large and wonderful embroideries, the best being of the sixteenth century. The common subject was the Entombment of Christ, done in life-size figures following the traditional Byzantine composition. Though all bear a superficial resemblance one to



another there is a great difference in the quality of line. One was monumentally impressive—a work of supreme nobility. These embroideries have all been put in order and are now protected by glass and admirably hung. The finest embroideries here came out of a school maintained by the Stariski family. The variety of the stitches and of the decorative patterns filling flat spaces, the elaborate embossing with needle-work, the majesty and perfection of line are indeed remarkable. Almost every embroidery carries rows and areas of small pearls. There must be bushels of them in this Treasury alone. But they are river pearls from the north of Russia, and I am told that a peasant working hard can find enough to fill a wine-bottle in a week. In quantity they produce a great effect. I noted especially a pearl cross on a pearl hill adored by a lovely Virgin and two Apostles with an Abbot and his follower below and little subjects in squares all round it. This was made by the divorced wife of Ivan the Terrible's father.

Histories are attached to many other embroideries, as that they were made by this or that royal lady or presented on some occasion; but we cannot linger over them. I regret that my knowledge of the art of embroidery is too limited to enable me to do justice to the wonderful and very numerous examples of that art which I saw in Russia. Some were of very early date. Thus one was shown to me in the Restoration Studio at Moscow which was worked

in the thirteenth century on a twelfth-century piece of silk purple in tone and woven with a design of Sassanian tradition. It was large in scale and of extreme rarity. In no other country can so many precious embroideries of early and later dates be found. Neglect on the part of their ecclesiastical owners was imperilling their existence. They are now being cared for with meticulous attention, and if this is maintained they may yet be handed down intact to a remote posterity.

Next we came to rooms hung round with vestments also under glass. They date back as far as the fifteenth century, but the best were of the sixteenth. Many were made of splendid pieces of stuff with richly embroidered tippets. Their royal donors are known but shall not be catalogued here. A gown in yellow silk worn by Ivan the Terrible himself is shown among the church-vestments. More embroidered hangings followed with full-length figures; one (presented by a Stroganov) has a glorious old gold tone. All the figures upon it except those of devils are outlined with pearls and the bosses include precious stones. The quality of this kind of work falls off in the seventeenth century. Some splendid Venetian velvets and all kinds of precious stuffs from Persia and all rarest looms find place in this marvellous collection. The eighteenth century was no less prolific in gifts, and here of course Catherine II did not fail. I cannot pass unnoticed a Bishop's mitre given by Empress Anna, including gold plates,



ONE OF THE TREASURE CHAMBERS IN THE TROITSKAYA LAVRA.



a blaze of jewels fine in effect though of small individual value, and some older pieces of Byzantine character—but I shall tire the reader with such detail. I am mentioning only a few examples out of scores.

We passed into a room containing many glass cases full of treasure. One enclosed small icons in costly metal frames, enamelled or bejewelled. Here was a gold chalice from Boris Godunov, silver plates from Ivan the Terrible, a quantity of the cups of the form called “kovsh” and smaller ones named “charka,” going back in date to the fifteenth century; cases full of precious and elaborate crosses from earliest Limoges downward, including a dated and inscribed Georgian cross of the fourteenth century; also censers, cups, teapots, mitres and a quantity of plate. There were many books in bindings of silver, also enamels, reliquaries, ivories—everything beyond memory or description. There were some haloes set with huge stones, collars, chains, pendants, spoons in cases. Two cupboards are filled with Nuremberg and Augsburg Renaissance cups. Other cases hold Spanish plate of the late sixteenth century, a large gilt tray or dish thought to be English of the seventeenth century, and much beside.

After a couple of hours in these rooms it was a relief to pass into the open air and rest awhile in the shade of trees. The day was lovely—a bright sun, a gentle breeze, and everywhere the glory of spring. The interval, however, could only be brief,

and back we went again to manuscripts, one with a fine metal binding dated 1392, miniatures, more embroideries, and more of all sorts of things dating from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Let it suffice to name a big Gothic chalice dated 1440 and made by one John Formin, with a bowl of rare stone set in most delicate filigree. Here also among other Byzantine objects was a thirteenth-century Virgin and Child with St. Anne painted in encaustic; she has a fine seal-red cloak and the whole is framed and set in silver. A curious censer of the fifteenth century is a model of the Trinity Church we had just visited, showing it in its original form with a lantern but without domes. This must have been made in the Lavra. So much then for the famous Treasury. I need scarcely add that its contents have never been cared for as they are to-day. Many of the embroideries have been saved from perishing by neglect. They have been repaired, placed under glass, admirably hung in well-ordered rooms, like all the other treasures, and are being scientifically catalogued. Many precious things have been found in cupboards and other forgotten receptacles, and even now scarcely a week passes in which some treasure does not come to light.

The Refectory, which we had passed on entering, is rather a gaudy building of the eighteenth century, all painted over with that peculiar nail-head decoration at one time popular in Russia. A palace in the Kremlin has this nail-head decoration sculptured



upon its walls. We did not enter the Refectory for lack of time, but leaving it on our left hand rapidly inspected the apartments of the Metropolitan and those adjacent which were occupied by the Tsars and other great visitors. The Metropolitan of Moscow was the head of the Lavra and spent much of his time here. His rooms and the guest chambers are far from grand. They are old-fashioned without being venerable. There were one or two large apartments, a vaulted hall, and chambers with much modelled and coloured stucco decoration of the eighteenth century, lacking in refinement and decidedly provincial. Here the ecclesiastical policy of all Russia was dictated by a succession of rather benighted authorities very tenacious of their powers. The chief's writing-table, chairs, and other furniture remain exactly as they were left. There is a carillon clock by Chater and Sons of London. I also noted a couple of Russian Delft bowls made by the English potter Gardner, whose work we shall elsewhere encounter in great quantity.

After wandering slowly through a number of chambers and desultorily examining their contents, I was fairly tired out and gladly sat on a log in the open air to rest awhile before returning to the railway station, but I was swiftly fetched away from it to sign my name in the visitors' book. I found it in one of a row of half a dozen rooms we had not entered. The walls of all of them were hung with icons, selected for their special merit out of an unexhibited multitude.

They were evidently full of beauty and interest, but I had seen enough. Eyes and power of appreciation were alike dulled. I could look at no more beautiful things. They told me that of the nine chief sights of the Lavra I had examined but three—the Trinity Church, the Treasury, and the Guest-house. I said that they sufficed. A walk on the roofed-in battlements along the broad way which measures the great thickness of the encompassing wall pleasantly concluded a visit rich in experiences.

We returned to Moscow by a train which presently became as densely packed with working folk as the one by which we had come. A boy-singer endeavoured to attract attention and kopecs with a raucous song and the rattling of bones, but he was swiftly silenced and I went sound asleep sitting bolt upright on the hard wooden seat of the crowded car and did not awake till we were back in Moscow.

## VII

### SOME IMPERIAL PALACES

Before visiting the Imperial Palaces in and around Petersburg it is interesting to inspect the house from which the Romanov family emerged. It is a small house from any point of view, but in the day when it was built it was probably thought to be a fine nobleman's residence and was doubtless one of many such houses inhabited by the rude boyars and nobles of its time. It lies in the heart of Moscow, occupying a corner where two streets join. One enters through an arched gateway flanked by out-buildings and thence emerges into a paved and sloping yard, the actual house occupying its upper side and high walls the others.

Though small, the house is a massive affair with very heavy details of portal and window. The building is partly of brick and partly of stone, the brick covered with plaster. The plaster is painted over with the nail-headed chequer pattern, which appears to have been admired in the seventeenth century and perhaps before. There are pairs of engaged columns which seem to strengthen the angles of the building, and there is a great outside staircase leading up to

the first floor, but it is a later reconstruction and the top storey is likewise a modern addition. The ground floor is a massive stone structure with vaulted cellars and was never, as I am told, an inhabited part. A staircase, though not the existing one, led up to the entrance. A staircase with a platform at the top was a practical necessity in all such houses, for the ceremonious fashion of the time determined that the owner of the house should distinguish a visitor by receiving him either in his room, or in the passage, or at the head of the staircase, or at its foot, according to his rank. When the Tsar visited one of his great men, as it was his fashion frequently to do in the early time, even he dismounted at the outer gate and walked across the courtyard, being received by his host at the foot of the stairs. The host would receive a nobleman of his own rank at their head.

The first-floor rooms were really the whole of the inhabited part of the house; they were few and heavily vaulted. Indeed the building of this period, as one observes it also in contemporary churches, was as heavy as our simplest Saxon architecture. The utmost care has been taken in the last year or two to remove every modern disfigurement from these rooms and to bring them back alike in decoration, in furniture, and in every possible detail to the condition as inhabited in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The passage door opens into a low square vaulted room, lit by small windows of leaded talc instead of glass. In the angle of the room is a table

with a movable bench alongside it. There is a fixed bench against the wall round two sides of the room. The table was covered with gold brocade. There was a large stove on which it was customary to sleep and there were chests to contain clothes and such like, but no cupboards at all. A few seventeenth-century chairs were added at a later date. They are in the style associated by us with the time of Charles II. On the table are enamel-handled knives, some forks, rare at that time, ewers and tankards.

Portraits were not painted in Russia before the seventeenth century, for fear of the evil eye. On the wall of this room there is hung one by Kneller of Potëmkin, who was sent on a mission to England. There is also beside it a German clock and an icon standing on a little shelf. This was the living-room of the house. Its walls and vaulting are decorated with simple designs. There is a small bedroom beyond it on the same floor, but the corresponding room to it in most houses would have been on the floor above. This contains, besides a bed, a decorated ivory box in a niche in the wall, a Spanish chest adorned with poker work, and a little mirror with a cover, the cover being supplied as protection against the evil eye. Here is a cross and another little icon on a shelf, for icons in houses were never hung on walls but always supported on a little shelf from which hung a piece of brocade or embroidery, changed from time to time just as the Japanese change their kakemonos. In the little study further on we found

a massive Dutch iron box on lion feet brightly painted, a small iron-bound safe, and some fifteenth-century boxes. Further on in the remotest and quietest part of the house is the little chapel, and here again are icons on shelves, two rows of them, beautiful in colour, and a lovely seventeenth-century Madonna. There are embroideries on the walls and there is a portrait of the Tsar. It was customary to put the most rich and costly stuffs and the best of everything in the chapel, where some service-books and Lives of the Saints were also kept.

The general effect of this small residence is cosy; the walls are very thick and the windows are small. There is a comfortable warmth of tone about everything and the harmony of colours is very good, but it is evident that the number of people who could have been accommodated in this residence was few. Presumably there existed an upper floor which the modern super-structure replaces. Such was the home of the head of the Romanov family who in the year 1613 was chosen to be Tsar. Doubtless in his high estate he inhabited a larger and more elaborate palace on the Kremlin, but of that nothing remains. The ordinary house of the time was of wood.

It is a little difficult to realize that within a century of the time when people were living in such houses as this and in the patriarchal fashion that such domestic architecture implies, the flood of West European influence, brought in by Peter the Great and maintained by his successors, entirely altered the



standards of living and replaced aristocratic houses of this kind by palaces in the French style of Louis XIV. The old buildings on the Kremlin were of the earlier type, but it is only the churches that survive. Those in style similar to St. Basil's matched in massiveness of form the houses of this rude monumental kind which were built at the same time. St. Basil's seems to me to express most perfectly what is typical of old Russia before the days of Peter the Great. Patriotic Russians, to whom I spoke, look back to this period with particular affection and regard the inroad of the West with all its luxury, extravagance, and wealth as a national calamity. They hold that the initiative of Peter the Great was injurious, and that if Russia could have been left to develop on her own very Oriental lines throughout the eighteenth century she would have attained a better and more enduring civilization than that which fell to the ground the other day with so terrific a crash. One factor in the Bolshevist movement is the wish to return to a purely Russian civilization. Whether this is now possible may be doubted, but it will be very interesting to watch the experiment that is being made.

The building of the Winter Palace in Petersburg was finished in 1764 from designs by the gifted architect Rastrelli, who was responsible for so much work in Russia. Its north front is along the left bank of the Neva and commands an admirable view across to the handsome buildings on the Vasili island and

(round to the right) the grim fortress of St. Peter and St. Paul illuminated by the beautifully shaped and lofty golden spire of its cathedral. The principal façade, however, is on the other side facing the Palace Square and the column of Alexander I rising in the midst with imposing buildings all about. These buildings are of brick, not specially notable as examples of architecture, but sufficiently grandiose. The brick is plastered over and the plaster is modelled into ornaments, the whole being painted a uniform brick-red—a wearisome colour that dominates the city. It was not ever thus. The walls of the Winter Palace originally were blue, the columns and window-frames white, the ornaments silvered. The endless galleries and chambers of the Palace do not express the taste or splendour of any particular reign, but illustrate the whole succession from Catherine II to the last of the Tsars. They are decorated and furnished in a corresponding succession of styles, chiefly French, from Louis XV downward, with a predominance of “Empire.”

The halls, galleries and chambers of estate in all palaces possess a kind of family likeness. Some are better proportioned, better decorated, and better furnished than others, but all have the same purpose—to be the frame of splendid assemblages of courtiers gorgeously attired. It is only when thus peopled that their effectiveness for their purpose could properly be judged. During the time I spent in and about Petersburg I must have passed through hun-

dreds of such rooms. A few of them remain clearly photographed in my memory. Most have become blurred. They have formed in my mind as it were a composite image into which a certain sense of weariness enters.

The state entrance to the Winter Palace gives access to the white marble and gilt Staircase of Honour, which is spacious, dignified, and impressive. It leads to the Great Hall of Nicholas I, through which we passed to the Doric Hall, the State Dining-room, and so to the Malachite Hall and the Silver Saloon. The Malachite Hall in Imperial days was thus described by M. Vasili Vereshchagin, who knew it well: "All the columns, tables, mantelpieces, pedestals of clocks and vases, enormous candelabra, are made of malachite—the favourite material of the period—and ornamented with rococo bronzes. The unpleasing, vivid green colour of the stone tires the eye. Colossal gilt sofas and chairs proudly stand along the walls; they are covered with rich green damask, their arms and legs are gilt and studded with carved Empire eagles' and swans' heads, with Louis XVI acanthuses and Louis XV loops and swirls. Enormous malachite tables are stiffly placed in front of them surrounded by unwieldy arm-chairs. It is all extremely pompous, heavy and rigid, but most characteristic for the aesthetics of the time." The doors of this pretentious chamber are of gilt bronze. A good deal of the furniture has been removed.

The overcrowded Hermitage Collections will presently find accommodation in these galleries. Some have already overflowed into rooms which I shall now mention. Thus the White Throne Room, with its white columns, gilt capitals and a gallery all round, is now filled with armour, on which I will only delay to mention that there is much of the kind associated with the name of Maximilian and many Italian suits and pieces, including a choice set of embossed helmets, an especially fine example being one that belonged to a Montefeltro. All this armour is admirably set up. We enter next the gallery of 1812, full of portraits, all painted by the Englishman Dawe about the year 1829. They depict Alexander I and a number of his generals and contemporaries, among whom Wellington occupies a prominent position. A room full of sporting arms follows and then the Hall of Alexander I, now filled with modern arms and trophies of war. In its gallery I saw an enormous stuffed crocodile. No one knows when or whence it came or anything about it. A superb collection of Oriental arms is set up in a large adjacent room.

Far more interesting than the State Apartments are the rooms in which the Tsars actually lived. They present not merely a pathetic human interest but a psychological problem. Bear in mind that the people who dwelt in them belonged to the wealthiest family in the world. Whatever they desired they could have. They possessed endless treasures of matchless beauty and rarity. Everything in the

Hermitage was their personal property. They could have hung their living-rooms with pictures by Raphael or Rembrandt. They could have decorated them with the loveliest *objets d'art*, which were stacked in thousands only a few yards away. They could have furnished them with the handiwork of the most perfect workmen of France in the great days of the eighteenth century. What they actually did was to hunt out some obscure set of small rooms in some remote corner of the huge building and to furnish them in the simplest, least tasteful, and most bourgeois style of their day.

A narrow spiral staircase leads down to the single room, no larger than a Bloomsbury dining-room, in which Nicholas I lived, worked, slept and apparently also ate. A yet smaller adjacent ante-room served for his aides-de-camp. The little iron bedstead on which he died stands close to his desk. For ornaments he had a bronze statuette of a child, made by its mother who gave it to him, some poor pictures, and a French coloured print or two. His moth-eaten coat still hangs on a chair. His little wardrobe would hold few clothes. Inside at the back is a mirror which opens like a door and discloses another picture—ye gods! That I will by no means attempt to describe. The spiral staircase continuing down leads to a bath-room and to two or three tiny rooms in which he could receive a guest. A private door opens to the garden.

Alexander II's apartments are larger but little



more luxurious. He also seems to have worked in his bedroom, or slept in his study, whichever way you like to put it. The bed was hidden behind a piece of wall round which you could walk to either end of it. Bed and floor are stained with his blood, for it was here that he was carried to die. There is a washing-stand close to his desk. On the latter is a calendar still showing the date of his last day, his pens, ink-pot, blotting-pad, photographs, and all his little things just as he left them. It is an ugly room and contains nothing of beauty or value. The blue bedroom of his wife is adjacent. It has no view. Then comes a gold and red reception room from which you can look out, and then a dining-room with a top light rather well decorated in plaster work. The suite also contained one or two rooms for secretaries and books; that is all. The broken-backed carriage against which the assassin's first bomb exploded is preserved on the ground floor of the palace.

The rooms of the last Tsar Nicholas II possess a no less pathetic interest and are marked by a like simplicity. They contain a billiard table, a piano, a library and a study in which a heavy wooden staircase leads to a book-gallery. The ornaments placed about are very common-place, the kind of things you might buy at a bazaar. The single luxury is a small swimming bath. In the dressing-room are many Easter eggs and cheap cigar-cases, and there are many framed photographs, including those of King George V and Queen Mary, which stand on a little



shelf in a prominent position. There are also in the study many personal photographs in cheap frames —of his wife as a German student, of the King of Denmark, and so forth. In the Tsaritsa's bedroom are again Easter eggs and icons, all of the latter being bad works of art except one small bas-relief in stone. Little seats for the children are grouped about the fireplace. The toilet appliances are quite simple. The drawing-room at the corner of the Palace commands a splendid view. Notwithstanding that the public seems to have obtained access to these rooms during the Revolution and ripped one or two painted portraits of unpopular persons, all the small objects were uninjured and remain as they were left. It is scarcely possible to imagine a more striking contrast than that offered by the private rooms of the Emperors and the stately halls into which they emerged, doubtless most unwillingly, on great occasions. There they could entertain a company which sometimes numbered 3,000 persons. Their own rooms would be overcrowded with a dozen visitors.

It was however not in the Winter Palace but at Tsarskoe Selo that the late Tsar and his family spent most of their time. "The Tsar's Village" is fifteen miles from Petersburg. The journey is conveniently made by train. Parallel to the track there used to run a single line reserved for the Tsar's train, which was ready at call whenever it was needed. The rails have been lifted from that and only the embank-

ments remain. How we got there is a good example of travel à la Russe. We were to have gone to Gatchina by a 9.30 a.m. train. Warned to be early at the Baltic Station, I was there at 8 and settled down in the refreshment room awaiting my convoy. One could get tea, bread, cheese, and ham—nasty ham. Presently a man arrived with buns in a bundle, his pockets full of money and his mouth of talk. Two men at a table beside me were counting their money. They had hundreds of half-rouble notes—new roubles. Crowds of people were sitting on the steps outside or standing about. Girls with baskets sold bread to them. Later, news came that the train was not to start at 9.30 but at 10. It was uncertain from which platform, or where tickets were to be bought. When that problem was solved a small pink notice was discovered saying that all trains would start an hour earlier than the time advertised. This was due to a sudden application of “summer time.” It was then five minutes to 9. The queue reaching to the booking-office was about thirty yards long. We entered it at the tail and did not reach the window till our train had started; so we postponed Gatchina till the next day and caught an 11 o’clock train from the Warsaw Station to Tsarskoe Selo.

The line runs through a very poor land which scarcely repays cultivation. It was golden with charlock. Many factories came in sight and a minority of the chimneys were smoking. The famous Púlkovo Observatory on its solitary hill was pointed

out to me. From the station we drove through the untidy decay of what was not so long ago a town of pretty villas and gardens. Its prosperity was dependent upon Palaces and Garrisons. We were deposited at a great gateway beside the Palace church with its golden domelets brilliantly glittering.

Of the two Palaces at Tsarskoe Selo let us first visit the smaller—the Palace called after Alexander I. We walked to it through a corner of the park round a lake and among oak-trees, which seem to be rare in Russia except in parks. Not far from our path was a railing. Nicholas II after his abdication resided here as a prisoner. We were treading in the footsteps of his daily walks with his children, the public peering at them through the railings. One comes on the Palace rather suddenly. It was shining brilliantly white in the sunshine. It is not large and produces a very pleasing effect with a great row of white well-proportioned columns in front of its centre, uniting the wings. The view of the green park from the main entrance, seen through the columns, is charming. We entered a great central horseshoe room or hall with divans and sculpture in it. Here the Imperial family spent their last night, all packed up and waiting for cars which did not come. Adjacent on one side of this hall is a room turned into a chapel, with a recess contrived where the Tsaritsa used to kneel, and chairs close in front of it for the Grand Duchesses. The room, once beautiful, makes an ugly chapel, but it was here they attended

their last service before starting on their pilgrimage of Death.

On the other side of the hall is a series of large rooms *en suite* which were occupied by Queen Victoria. They are beautiful rooms, well proportioned and tastefully decorated, for they date from the time of Catherine II (1796). One of them is spoiled by a big polished hollow wooden glissade for children to slide down from a platform at the top! Hereabout we passed through three library rooms and a room arranged for the last Tsaritsa, with a desk in it. Right in front of her when there seated hung, by her own recorded choice, a tapestry copy of a portrait of that unfortunate Marie Antoinette whose ill fate she was destined herself to suffer.

The entrance to the private apartments of Nicholas II and his family is out of a dark windowless corridor leading to a separate door from the park. One first enters a waiting-room panelled with oak, surmounted by a row of pictures—landscapes, seascapes, and so forth. They are not very good pictures, but the Tsar loved them, having bought them for himself out of exhibitions and personally superintended their hanging and re-hanging. The table was covered with books of photographs. His own sitting-room has an enormous low divan. On his writing-desk lay a blotting-book autographed with the signatures in silver of all the Grand Dukes and Duchesses in 1889. Most of his little things are gone, for he packed them up and took them away with him on his last journey,

but dozens of photographs of relations remain, as well as a number of pathetic little gifts from his children, all quite simple and cheap. Adjacent is a good-sized swimming bath with tiled walls, and a billiard-room with a staircase leading up to a book-gallery all made in polished mahogany in the *art nouveau* style and with an *art nouveau* ceiling. There is a table covered with books which belonged to Napoleon and there also used to be a bust of him close by. There are mountains of albums of photographs of army manœuvres. One of the troubles of being a Tsar was that if he expressed interest in anything it descended upon him in an avalanche. Thus Nicholas was interested in manœuvres and probably ordered photographs of them to be sent to him. The result was a heap of ponderous tomes, all finely bound and so numerous as to be valueless by their multitude.

A crooked passage from the gallery led to a corresponding gallery in the Tsaritsa's room. On it were many toys and a table with an elaborate jig-saw puzzle with which she greatly entertained herself. There was also a glazed pottery pig from a shop in North Audley Street which occupied an empty fireplace. This room also is decorated in *art nouveau* style and is just such as a contracting and expensive shop would have turned out about thirty years ago. There were plenty of comfortable chairs and sofas arranged in groups and "cosy corners" convenient for talk. There was also a great seat forming most of a circle with a shelf all round it on the top of the



back to carry framed photographs, Gallé glass, Russian imitations of it, and other undesirable ornaments.

The next room, panelled with polished mahogany, was where they dined *en famille*. Here was a picture of the Tsaritsa's birthplace, Friedburg, which came to her as a wedding present from her girl-contemporaries. A dado-shelf was loaded with framed photographs. A door leads into the Tsaritsa's special sitting-room. Its colours are lilac and cream, lilac having been her favourite. Here was the couch on which she often lay when suffering from ill-health. This room also contains countless framed photographs of relations. I noticed one of the German Emperor and his wife, inscribed "Bester Grüßen für Alice" and dated 1911. A little box by the sofa still contained a few bonbons. The Imperial family usually spent the evening together in this room, the Tsar often reading aloud to them. The Tsaritsa's bedroom followed, with a lace bedcover and sachet on rose silk, and many icons above the bed, but they cluster in greater number, over a hundred of them, in a little closet behind, where the poor superstitious lady retired to say her prayers, which, if she ever asked for wisdom, were but indifferently answered. In her bedroom also hang the pictures, copies of Fra Angelico and the like, which she brought with her from her own room at Darmstadt. A bath-room, dressing-room and staircase to the nurseries complete these apartments.

The Great Palace of Tsarskoe Selo, which is called



the Palace of Catherine II, is situated at no great distance from the other. We walked to it through the park. It was built from the designs of Rastrelli in the years 1747-56. It is an immense building 326 yards in length with short wings added a little later and a semicircle of low service-buildings in front. The façade, formerly coloured blue and white, is many-columned and there is a row of caryatids on the ground floor. Capitals and modelled ornaments were gilt but now are dark-painted and look heavy. Entering by a side door we mounted to the first floor and could look along from room to room through doorway after doorway the whole immense length of the Palace. All the rooms are large, occupying more than half the depth of the building. Some which occupy the whole depth and look out on both sides may be called enormous. The space behind the narrow rooms is occupied by small apartments in which people could really live. The possible fate of palaces was suggested to us by two pictures by the ubiquitous Hubert Robert, one showing the Louvre as it is, the other as it may some day be, in ruins with an artist sketching among fallen columns and broken walls. We first entered the apartments of the wife of Alexander I. They include a room decorated in Chinese fashion with satin brocade embroidered with pheasants. The next room is elaborately ornamented with plaster work in blue and gold, very rococo and very effective, with many gold cherubs, pilasters and other complications. These were the Empress's

state rooms. Her private apartments behind them are four in number and quite small. The bed is hidden behind a screen-wall after the Russian fashion. The furniture and decoration is "Empire" and there is a pretty portrait of the Empress by Vigée le Brun.

Following along the main row we come next to a Wedgwood room and then to a number of admirable rooms decorated in white and gold in the time of the Empress Elizabeth, Peter the Great's daughter, with carved-wood doors and much delightful brocaded furniture of her time and that of Catherine II. A suite was designed by the architect Cameron. For Alexander I the panels of a room were filled with paintings of the months done on silk in Japanese style. The next is entirely covered with pictures—an old view of the Palace in its original colouring before the high wings were added, a Kalmuk family by Daniel Schultz, an Aert van der Neer, a Teniers, and so forth. There are also immense stoves of blue tiles and elaborate gilded door-frames. Now we enter the famous Amber Room. Three of its walls are entirely sheathed in amber, the gift of a Prussian King to Peter the Great, set up after Rastrelli's design. There is none on the window wall. The amber is arranged in panels and much of it is most elaborately carved. Some little ovals low down are sculptured in delicate cameos. There are also carved mirror-frames and candelabra in flaming amber. Some pictures are well and harmoniously inset, and the floor is of mosaic. The whole work deserves its

great renown. Its last inhabitant was Catherine II and she left within it various amber ornaments, caskets and the like.

A little farther on we come to the head of the principal staircase and are in the middle of the long front. The stairs are white, the curtains red, and there are great Chinese vases on brackets. A silver and blue dining-room intervenes before we enter the *Salle des Glaces*, measuring  $140 \times 52$  feet, the largest room in the Palace. The decoration is of gilt carving, but the picture on the ceiling is not of corresponding excellence. Here great balls and state banquets were given, one, for instance, to President Loubet and one to the King of Saxony shortly before the outbreak of war. The room in which the Duke of Edinburgh was married to the Tsar's daughter contains a number of Chinese vases on consoles, but has otherwise passed out of my memory, nor can I recall several rooms that followed, most of them finished for Catherine II; but no one can forget the *Lapis Lazuli Saloon* with its tables and chandeliers of that precious stone. The floor is parqueted with inlay of rare woods and mother-of-pearl. It is recorded that Catherine II was specially fond of this room. At the turning of the wing we passed through Catherine's Chinese Room, the walls of which are panelled with rare lacquer screens. Here stands a red lacquer vase, a gift from the last Chinese to the last Russian Emperor. From the balcony we looked down into a deserted garden all-a-blow with

straggling lilacs, and there is a marble fountain in the unmown grass, and what were beds are overgrown with weeds. Next year this is to be put to rights.

In her last years Catherine lived in the small rooms that follow and lead out on to a terrace. She had lived in the rooms afterwards occupied by Alexander I, but growing tired of rococo decoration had the small rooms decorated in the purer but more finished style of Louis XV. Here is her bed behind a screen with an alcove to right and left. It has purple glass columns. The tiny adjacent chamber she called her Snuff-box because its adornments were such as one sees on French snuff-boxes of the period. In the last room is her wheelèd chair, which could move out on the level to the raised garden, whence a ramp as well as a great staircase lead down to the park.

But even this is not the end, for there is an open space at the head of the stairs behind which stands the Agate Pavilion, built for Catherine by Cameron. It contains several rooms in the classical style. In one the columns are made of pieces of agate closely joined and the walls are panelled with jasper. Another room is wholly panelled with agate. There is also a marble room. All the floors are beautifully inlaid and kept in perfect condition of cleanliness and polish. Lengthwise along the middle of the terrace runs a glazed gallery with porticoes down either side of it, one facing a lovely view of park and water, the other looking on to a tree-enclosed parterre—a dog's cemetery with Niobe to weep over them. On

this terrace we gladly rested after sight of so many rooms and so many things, including quantities of pictures which I have not named and individual works of art which I do not recollect. The change from so much artificial splendour and luxury to the open air and nature was most refreshing, but even nature here was ordered by art, every tree planted in a selected place and the lake shaped and bridged to the order of an architect. Still nature always triumphs, even when most obedient to man; the eye tired with works of art rests upon green grass, the foliage of trees, and a surface of calm water.

I will ask the reader to believe that the Great Park of Tsarskoe Selo is a very beautiful thing. It has a large and other smaller lakes, many temples and bridges. Among the latter is a copy of Palladio's bridge which finds replicas in more than one well-known park in England. We walked awhile in these beautiful surroundings and then patiently sat down beside a broad and empty high-road awaiting such transport as Providence might send. I was hopeless; my companion was sanguine. The event justified him. A one-horse trap came along and agreed to carry us a short three miles for a fare of something over ten shillings. I was already so tired that I would gladly have paid more. We came to Pavlovsk village and by a long lime-avenue approached the Palace. The road plunged into a lovely valley and curved round up to it, passing close under a wall adorned with the busts of Roman



Emperors and a little temple covering Canova's Three Graces. The unregenerate boy within me regarded them as super-cock-shies, and it says very much for the calf-like quietude of youthful Russia that such a temptation should have existed for a century or so and never a stone been thrown or the least damage done to such inviting targets. Perhaps a love of stone-throwing has never arisen in this country of dust and mud.

The Palace of Pavlovsk was built in 1782-4 by the Scottish architect Charles Cameron for the Emperor Paul. It belonged to the Grand Duke Constantine (son of Alexander III), who was a poet, a man of learning, taste, and intelligence, who is deservedly remembered with respect and even admiration. The general plan of the building is an oval, open on one of the long sides. Opposite this opening is the main building, and at each of the ends of the oval is a smaller building. The remainder of the oval is enclosed by curved connecting galleries. The most important works of art which were preserved here, notably some antique busts and one or two pictures, have been removed to the Hermitage. We entered the main building and, mounting to the first floor, found ourselves within a central dome beautifully proportioned and decorated with excellent taste and reserve. The Grand Duke revolted against electric lights and continued to illuminate this and all his other rooms of State with candles in old crystal glass and gilt bronze chandeliers. Behind the dome came



a Corinthian columned room with a small round room at each end containing good antique sculpture and places for the aforesaid busts. All these rooms, alike in themselves and their furniture, produce a pleasing impression and are monuments of good taste.

We came next into a horseshoe saloon hung with three quite glorious Boucher tapestries, predominantly rose-coloured. They stand out in my memory as the chief treasure of Pavlovsk. In the same room I also noticed two very fine old French clocks. The Imperial builder's wife employed her leisure in turning ivory. This and most of the other palaces I visited contained examples of her handiwork—temples, columns, and all kinds of "ornaments," in which the chief constituent parts were columns. Many of them were mounted with metal decorations by skilful artificers and I suspect that only the ivory work was actually done by the Imperial lady. Two or three succeeding "Empire" rooms contained several monuments of her industry.

We now traversed one of the long curved wings with windows on both sides, connecting the three "corps de logis." Here were pictures by Angelica Kaufmann, Lingelbach, Duyster, as well as other Dutchmen, and of course Hubert Robert. A lovely Cuyt deserves particular mention—a peaceful river view with two figures and sheep on the top of the bank projected against blue and partly clouded sky. Through a little round room we entered the Louis

XVI ball-room, the decoration of which was never finished, and beyond that came to a sculpture gallery. Here were many Roman sarcophagi and marble ash-boxes, one or two of real beauty, and here also were some Italian marble slabs with admirable heraldic inscriptions of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, which I could not pause to read. Returning to another part of the house we passed through the Tsaritsa's bedroom, in the European style with the bed fully displayed and not hidden behind a wall. Here was a Sèvres toilet-set, one piece at least having the portrait and monogram of Marie Antoinette. I might mention other rooms if it were worth while.

The reader may have observed that in this Palace there is more variety in the form of the rooms, united as they are by long curving galleries and many of them lightly and delicately decorated, than in other Palaces we visited. One observes throughout the play of a cheerful fancy. There is no impressive magnificence, no immense vistas. Here one conceives that a wealthy family might live without having to shelter itself in small back chambers to escape from the weight of pompous ceremonial surroundings.

The park of Pavlovsk is also the prettiest I saw. So much of the other parks as passed before my vision was flat. At Pavlovsk the Palace looks into a lovely valley with lakes in it and a stream. Birds were singing; the trees of many sorts were mantling

with young green foliage; girls were plucking lilacs in great bunches and folk were taking their ease in glades and on parterres. In such happy surroundings we also rested and were thankful, before making our way to the station, not without thoughts of beer. For there, close beside the station, is a pleasure ground, once the resort of wealth and fashion. A band used to play in the kiosk. Refreshment was served at little tables all around and there was a sheltering colonnade encircling the whole. They called the place Vauxhall. As the first railway ever built in Russia ran from Petersburg to this place, the name "Vauxhall" became attached to the station and so it came to pass that Vauxhall is the Russian word for all railway stations. Needless to say this particular Vauxhall has fallen from its high estate. No band any longer plays nor is there any fashionable society to people the vacant colonnade. The refreshment obtainable is now the very simplest, but it includes beer, and never was that delectable drink more enjoyed than it was that evening by us.

Our train was due to start at 8. We arrived at the station at 7.15, to be told that the train had gone. The statement was confirmed by a written notice over the ticket office announcing the change as to be made for the first time on that very day. The next train was to start at 10 p.m. for 11. "No matter," we said with Russian resignation; but after all things turned out otherwise. Though the 8 o'clock train had in fact started at 7, habit or some other

freak had operated and another 8 o'clock train was going all the same. We caught it and once more I slept all the way to town.

The last Imperial Palace I shall endeavour to describe is that of Gatchina, which, up to the Revolution, was the summer home of the Empress-Mother. This was built by Rinaldi in 1766-81, that is to say in the time of Catherine II. It is an immense stone-built pile, with a great central building and two smaller buildings united to it by curving wings reaching out toward the park and enclosing a vast open space or courtyard. It is surrounded by a battlemented parapet and beyond that by a moat now almost dry. Imposing heraldically adorned iron gates admit or exclude the visitor. Each of the three main blocks of the Palace is built round a square yard. The middle block is the oldest. We entered by a side-door to the Director's apartment and were shown into a room commanding a beautiful view over the park and displaying amongst other pictures one representing a meet of Sir Robert Walpole's hounds at Houghton. The Palace contains some 3,000 pictures, predominantly Old Masters. I shall mercifully spare the reader most of the ten sheets of notes I wrote about them, for though a great many of them are good and even precious, none are of outstanding importance.

The first large room we entered had marble bas-reliefs let into the walls. One was very good Roman work showing Vespasian sacrificing to the gods—

a group of six men and two boys sculptured almost in the round. There was also on the same wall a most attractive Shepherd of the second century. After this we came into rooms hung with pictures—Molyn, Verschur, and so forth, including portraits of our William III by Kneller and of George I by Wooton. One of the curving wings was full of Hubert Roberts, which pleased me greatly. They are an admirable decoration. Here a large party of school-children trooped through, conducted by a teacher who, to judge by their faces, had plenty of interesting things to say to them.

Next we came to the apartments of the wife of the Tsar Paul, a great bedroom with pilasters imitated from Raphael's Loggie and an enormous bed with delicate ormolu decorations. Two huge Sèvres vases stood beside it. A tapestry room with red and gold chairs followed. The tapestries display the adventures of Don Quixote; they are dated 1774 and signed by Cozette and Audron. More tapestries embellish the Throne-room, which contains a copy of the silver throne of Peter the Great. Another curved gallery, in which a housemaid was vigorously dusting, led us into the Eastern block. A gallery surrounds the two sides of the courtyard which this block encloses. I roughly measured the length of the two reaches of this gallery. One was about seventy and the other about sixty yards in length. Their combined 130 yards are entirely filled by a vast collection of Chinese *objets d'art*, over 10,000 in number,



and all brought together more than a century ago.

I will invite the reader to try and picture the scene. The gallery is rather narrow; there is a row of windows looking into the yard on one side and a blank wall on the other. Against the blank wall there stand a succession of lacquered cabinets a few feet apart; between and before them are tall vases, small tables covered with china, with lacquer trays and so forth, and dozens upon dozens of brackets fastened to the wall carrying delightful figures, cups, jugs, vases, jades, and all sorts of things. Opposite, under the windows, are table cases and things standing on the floor, and the walls between the windows are fully occupied. I see I have forgotten to mention the lacquer screens, of which there are a number. I was allowed to open as many cabinets as I pleased. They are full of drawers and every drawer is crammed with little things, Canton enamels, carvings in ivory, small boxes, every kind of object that collectors seek. I was told that there is not an empty drawer in the gallery. It was only by close packing that we got the things back into the drawers we opened. Most of the items in this huge collection date from the eighteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Passing on from this gallery we came among more pictures in profusion, two very large portraits of George II and his Queen by Allan Ramsay and two great Shahs. Among the pictures are many landscapes of the transitional period, the sixteenth and early seventeenth century, when artists were begin-

ning to look at nature broadly and attempting to depict the effect rather than the facts of a view; some of these landscapes are very romantic. It is through such pictures that one obtains an understanding of the curious descriptions of the terrors of travel through such mountainous regions as are traversed by the lower Alpine passes—descriptions which to us seem so exaggerated. These pictures show how that kind of scenery looked to people of those days. We explored some rather abandoned-looking rooms in which much ugly furniture is collected and others used as a depot for paintings awaiting study and classification.

The private apartments of Paul I are on the cold ground floor. He also had his bedroom and study in one. His boots, coat, etc., are lying about. There is a picture of a stag-hunt arranged in his honour at Chantilly, where the poor stags were shepherded together for a horrible massacre. Near by is the Throne-room, where, being left alone, I sat on the throne and wrote my notes. Some one having gone off with the keys I found myself locked in, so I wandered about and sat on more thrones. Escaping from confinement I was led through an entresol overflowing with pictures and then had again to wait in a hall where the only thing to sit on was a big stuffed dog beside a stuffed bear near a huge magnet supporting a heavy weight—a great thing like an anchor. Alexander II's private rooms are very Victorian in furniture and cretonnes. We could find

no bath, but I was convinced that in the Victorian way one would be found covered up and made to look like something else. My guess proved correct. I pulled at rather an awkward-looking sofa and the top slid away, disclosing the bath! Of about the same date is a huge dressing-table and mirror of complicated and hideous porcelain made in the Imperial factory about 1850-60.

Most curious of all is the apartment of Alexander III. It mainly consists of one very large vaulted room with massive piers to carry the vaults. It is approached by a long churchwarden Gothic passage. The whole family, parents and children, seem to have lived here together. It contains an extraordinary mixture of things. To begin with, outside the entrance to the great room I found a dozen or more bicycles heaped together. They include the earliest type of wooden bone-shaker, and they illustrate the development of the machine as far as the type with a very big wheel. I wonder who rode them. Whoever it was he tired of the amusement shortly before the introduction of inflated tyres. Within the great room one first comes up against a lot of stuffed birds and beasts and skins on the floor. There is a model cannon. There is a swing for the children and a polished wooden shute or glissade. At one end of the room is a small fully-equipped stage. A dining-table is in one corner and there are writing-tables and books, two pianos and a billiard table. There are toys, furniture, a stuffed eagle with two heads,

sporting guns, anything and everything that was ever desired by any member of the family. One receives the impression that these people at any rate had a good time and enjoyed themselves after a human fashion. It is the only room in any of the Palaces and great houses I saw in which a sense of happiness seems to linger. Behind it come the grimly practical and almost ascetic chambers of Nicholas I. A passage hung with cheap framed oleographs and a hall containing a huge stuffed bison are the last things I remember before emerging into the park.

We took refuge and rest from so much looking at things in a little private garden still decently tended. A central circle is surrounded by Herms and from it pleached alleys radiate. A black-capped finch of sorts sat on the head of a Herm and tweaked at us. There is a Dutch garden near by which is not to be allowed to remain neglected. The park is lovely. It is and always has been open to the public. A great terrace looks down on labyrinthine lakes and there are many pavilions, temples, grottos, and summer houses. One is built of logs like the home of a backwoodsman. An Empress ordered it as a joke. She took her husband to see it. He chaffed her for her simple taste. The doors were flung open and he was invited to enter. The interior contains the most delicately adorned rooms in Empire style with moulded plaster work, painted ceiling, inlaid floor, and cushioned alcove. It is a costly toy. On

the "Isle of Love" is the "Pavilion of Venus," copied from one in the park at Chantilly. The interior of this also is as elaborately decorated as any room in the Palace. These are but two of a great number of such pretty places in the park.

We were not to reach Petersburg without another railway adventure. Realizing that the 7.15 train might be expected to start at 6.15, we telephoned for confirmation and were told it would start at 7.35 from another station. We drove there and found that there was no 7.35 train at all, but the time-table assured us that there would be an 8.25 train from the station we had come by. So we drove there only to discover that there would be no train till 10 p.m. Inquiry ultimately elicited the explanation that the time-table had been printed off before the proof had been corrected and that it was full of misprints which would be set right next month!



## VIII

### CONFISCATED HOUSES

The number of private houses, large and small, confiscated by the Soviet Government is of course all there were. The problem of what use to make of them was and remains by no means a simple one. In Petersburg many of the big houses were burnt down during the tumultuous days of the Revolution and they remain gaunt shells open to the sky or heaps of overthrown ruins. A larger number have become uninhabitable through neglect or mis-handling. It will be remembered that Petersburg passed through a terrible winter of starvation and cold. Fuel was not to be had for love or money and the people were perishing. Why none went a mile or two out into the islands and cut down the trees I was unable to discover. Apparently the disorganization was such that even so simple a procedure could not be organized. The proletariat was accordingly permitted to enter empty houses and tear up floors and any wood they could lay hands on. Many large houses were thus ruined. Other removables—taps, door-handles, pipes, everything—were also carried off and these buildings are

now uninhabitable. It matters the less as the population of Petersburg has diminished as much as that of Moscow has increased. In Moscow little damage was done and all has been made good. The most important private palaces in Petersburg, with their contents, were protected, and have been turned into Museums, but there are more of them than can ultimately be maintained.

The owners of some of the large houses in Moscow were permitted to remain in two or three rooms and, in the case of those containing valuable collections, to become their caretakers. Thus it was with the remarkable Shchukin collection of modern French pictures, which is one of the best in the world. M. Ostroukhov was also left in charge of his own fine collection of pictures and icons. The comprehensive furniture collection in the house of the Grand Duke Serge has been preserved and added to. In other Moscow houses new collections have been formed such as the Museum of the Revolution, the New Russian Museum near the Legations, a Tolstoy Museum of rather dingy relics, a Museum of Toys, and so forth. I was not able to visit all these Museums, for though the spirit was willing the flesh was weak in relation to the apparently endless demands made upon it. Indeed, I had to fly from Moscow in sheer dismay at the amount there was insistently demanding to be seen.

A word, however, must be said about the Toy Museum. It occupies the rooms of a large private

house in a residential quarter looking out upon a public garden. Its director is the ideal man for his job. He was a wealthy landowner in pre-Revolution days and he is an accomplished painter. He started a number of village art-schools on his property and was beloved by his peasants. The Soviet Government ordered him to make a Museum for children and gave him the house in which it is shown. The result of his few years of work is remarkable. He displays the history of toys, the methods and stages of toy-making, the toys of many peoples and of various parts of Russia. He has dolls'-houses and dolls of all sizes, ages, and costumes. He has designs for toys made by himself and admirably drawn and coloured. He gave me the poster that advertises his Museum—"Children! come to your own Museum!"—and little pictures of the kind of thing they will see. They in fact come by hundreds and he receives them personally and shows them round. They discuss the kind of new toy they would like. He draws it; they criticize; he alters this and that till they finally approve. The toy is then made. It sells by hundreds and thousands. No toy is so popular as one thus contrived. The children love him. They recognize him in the street and run after him, calling out, "Here comes Uncle Museum." Life for him at any rate is still full of interest. I wonder whether he has time to regret the loss of his property.

It is curious how little bitterness I observed in

the many men and women with whom I was brought in contact who from wealth have been reduced almost to destitution. One girl told me that the new conditions were easy enough for her to bear, but that she wondered at the calm resignation of her mother, who had been a rich and very beautiful society lady, accustomed to every comfort and yearly foreign travel, and now was reduced to living in two rooms and doing her own house-work. Another very eminent Russian who had owned a country house, a town house, and a good income, and was now working for a bare subsistence wage, told me that somehow he did not seem to mind very much. He said: "We Slavs are like that; we are not very strongly attached to material things. They come and they go, and we don't feel their loss badly. In fact, we are Oriental fatalists. We submit to what comes. We are far more Oriental than the people of Europe generally realize." These remarks seemed to me very illuminating. It appears to us Westerners that a counter-revolution must be brewing somewhere and that people will not settle down quietly to the loss of all their family possessions. In England such universal confiscation would be impossible. A Government that should take away from us our mothers' portraits and all the little as well as the great things to which personal and family sentiment strongly adheres, could not last for a week. It would be overwhelmed by almost universal public execration. Nothing of the kind arises in Russia.

People may feel this or that, but they feel it weakly, and the feeling becomes dulled with the passage of time. The Soviet Government may be expected to change and develop by compulsion of circumstances. I do not expect it to be violently overturned. The all-Russian feeling is very strong and more than counterbalances individual resentment. Of this perhaps I shall have more to say elsewhere.

Among the great houses of the old nobility in Petersburg three stand out pre-eminently and are maintained with scrupulous care: they are those of the Yusúpovs, the Shuválov, and the Stróganovs. I visited them all and will briefly describe them. On my way to the first of these I passed a body of soldiers marching with very slow step in a closely massed formation, filling the whole width of the street, and finely singing in unison a stately and rather melancholy song. The street was entirely empty of folk and the song echoed mournfully among great public buildings. I could still hear it far away as I entered the Yusúpov house and mounted the white marble staircase to the gallery of tapestries. The usual row of great rooms followed, leading one out of another and all facing a canal. This is the house in which the infamous Rasputin was laboriously done to death. The tragedy took place on the ground floor. I did not hunt out the actual scene. Two great white ball-rooms are the finest in the house. There are big portraits of Alexander II and others on the walls. A large



mirror is framed at one end. It cleverly hides a cupboard within which a quantity of valuables were hidden, but they did not escape discovery and confiscation. A range of top-lit rooms is hung with many pictures, but the owner succeeded in carrying away the two great Rembrandts which were the glory of his gallery. I noted pictures by Boilly, Corot, Meissonier, and so forth, the interiors of four principal Roman churches delightfully painted by Pannini, four good Claudes, some Bouchers, a group of sickly sweet Greuzes, and best of all a most attractive little oval Madonna by Tiepolo. A big version of Cleopatra's Feast by the same artist resembles in spirit though not in composition his well-known picture in the Hermitage. It depicts the same models. One room is wholly decorated with Hubert Roberts and ormolu ornaments. Late Italians of mediocre merit are largely represented and so are seventeenth-century Flemings and Dutchmen. The gallery as a whole is pretentious and expensive rather than noble. It ends in a small theatre with a foyer whose walls and ceiling are covered with Gobelins, far the best feature in the house. There is a sumptuous royal box and the furnishing throughout is in good taste.

The first room I entered in the Shuválov Palace pleased me on the threshold with a perfect little salt-cellar of that rare St. Porchère ware whose place of manufacture in France still remains a mystery. For me that ware possesses an extraordinary attrac-

tion and I can understand the passion of collectors for its smallest fragment without desiring to emulate them in the exaggerated prices they are willing to pay. A beautiful half-length Virgin and Child attributed to Rosellino seemed to be imbued with the very spirit of the dawn of the Renaissance. It was in a case with some good majolica, near other wall-cases of Palissy-ware, Delft, Persian, and Russian pottery. Among the latter was an amusing imitation of an English Uncle Toby jug. Passing through the inevitable Hubert Robert room, we entered the small dining-room with cabinets containing Sèvres, a green Staffordshire service, and one of Dresden china. Another cabinet is filled with plate, including a Paul Lamerie salver and several German pieces of a good period. The big dining-room has heavy woodwork with carved pediments, twisted columns, and the like elaborations. The table decorations by Tomire are of ormolu and crystal and there are pictures of small individual importance on the walls. The ball-room with its row of bas-reliefs above the windows remains as it was built and decorated in the time of Paul I, the rest of the house having been reconstructed. It was built for a Naryshkin. There is a charming portrait by Delaroche of the Naryshkin heiress through whom by marriage the house came into the possession of the Shuválovs. The blue saloon is furnished with expensive but not distinguished furniture; it has an elaborate carved ceiling supported on columns, large

gilt candelabra, portraits on the walls, including one of Peter the Great by Arrigoni, and books of photographs on the tables. The red saloon flames with gold and red damask beneath a tunnel ceiling. There are pictures here by Ribera and other Spaniards, including some Catalonian primitives. The library table groans under bound volumes of the *Illustrated London News* and the *Graphic*. A glass table-case holds a rare set of fifteenth-century Italian playing cards made for Spanish gamblers. Some carved oak figures, a fifteenth-century German picture of the usual brilliantly decorative sort, and an Italian bureau here also find place. I can only rush through a white room with chairs gaily embroidered by Russian peasants and china figures in wall-cases, a brilliant collection of crystals, a fourteenth-century Cairo mosque lamp, glasses of Venice and Bohemia, and several painted fans. A French room in light blue with a version of Falconet's Cupid in the middle, and a round room specially beloved by the family, remain to be mentioned. They contain many a pretty drawing and bibelot which it will be the business of a catalogue to name. I thought this was the end, but was soon disillusioned, for the Shuválov Palace is a real treasure-house and there was yet much more to see.

After a rest, therefore, we set forth again, not a little bewildered by such profusion. I can but throw at the reader's head a collection of ivories, including a Byzantine triptych of the forty Martyrs,

a Florentine "tondo," and some other primitives of considerable decorative charm but little actual importance. The reader must now imagine Asia Minor Tanagras, a collection of watch-cocks, one of Italian bronzes, and another case of Rhenish and Limoges enamels including a blue casket surrounded by saints in niches. Now come yet more meritorious pictures—one of a splendid red waistcoat with a man inside it holding a roll of paper. It is attributed by Friedländer (so they told me) to Mabuse. Beside his waistcoat the man has whiskers, a short beard, and a black cap over the net that keeps his hair in order. Mabuse is better recalled by the modeling of the face than by the drawing of the hand; but if Friedländer is assured, his word is good enough for me. This really was the end. I descended the white staircase and went out into the street more than satiated.

The day, however, or rather the day's task, was not yet done. It was 7 p.m., but key-bearers were still awaiting me at the Stróganov Palace and I could not fail them. The house is simpler in decoration than the two I have briefly described and gives evidence of better taste. I have already referred to the three Stróganov collections. All were remarkable and deservedly famous for the rare and precious objects they contained. The collection in Rome is distinguished by Early Christian and other treasures which exemplify and illustrate a superior intelligence. The Petersburg Palace on the Nevski

Prospect was likewise distinguished. The best of the pictures and some of the treasures, such as a Sassanian silver dish, have been removed to the Hermitage, but the bulk of the collection remains in the rooms to which it has belonged for many years. The picture gallery is certainly the most charmingly decorated I saw in any Petersburg house. The predominant tone is green and even the inevitable great malachite vase enters harmoniously into the general scheme. One large room remains in my memory through possessing what we should call an "Adam" fireplace with a frieze of little gilt bronze dancing figures which seemed to infect the whole place with their frolicsome gaiety. Another version of Falconet's Cupid here also finds place. I must not forget, indeed I cannot, a large table-case containing no fewer than twenty of Pisanello's medals collected years ago before uninstructed buyers had recognized either their value or their charm. There is a large library of books gathered before and down to the year 1820. The reader will easily guess how rich and decorative is the effect produced by their massed bindings. A colossal granite Head of Zeus in this room arrests the attention of every visitor. It is a copy of the ambrosial-lock type so often repeated in antiquity, but the sculptor who made it in 1810 was in fact a serf from some Stróganov estate who also worked on the Kazan Cathedral.

As for the pictures, I can but name a few of them sufficiently meritorious to have revived my tired



and flagging attention. Most vividly there arises in my memory a glorious blue feather-fan painted by Van Dyck in a lady's hand, but the lady herself and her child have faded away, neither do I recall the pendant picture of her husband. There was a beautiful Claude hanging between two Nicholas Poussins, a view of Haarlem from the linen-bleaching fields by Ruysdael, and a first-class Adrian van der Velde. Among the Italians I noted nothing more remarkable than a Giampietrino and a full-length and richly coloured Bartolommeo Viviarini; several second-rate examples of the school left me unimpressed. A sixteenth-century Antwerp triptych and a good pair of portraits by Nicholas Neufchatel may be named. Of course there were a score or so of Hubert Roberts, which seem to have been indispensable to every wealthy Russian collector. The last rooms I entered contained a chaos of pictures resting against one another on the floor, oddments of furniture, ornaments, and what-not. Treasures will be found among them by some one with a less jaded power of observation than I then retained.

It was after 8 p.m. when the last door of these great houses closed upon me and I found myself in the Nevski Prospect—that famous street, long, broad, and straight, once so gay with costly equipages and fashionable folk, now mainly coursed by trams and, though still populous with pedestrians, peopled only by a multitude honourably though unpicturesquely clad in working clothes. The men I could

forgive, but the almost total lack of women in tasteful attire even of a simple sort made the world look strangely dull. The low-flung sunlight broke upon the buildings and sharply defined the shadows. The sky was a blue-grey. It was the illumination of a Canaletto town-landscape. Everything was definite and a little hard. I sat in the open space near the Kazan Cathedral and absorbed repose from the beautiful fading of the weary day before creeping back with rather faltering steps to the seclusion of my hotel.

## IX

### THE HERMITAGE

The Hermitage Gallery is known by repute to all who take any interest in matters of art the whole world over, but few indeed are they, other than Russians, who have been able to visit it during the last ten years. It was not even generally known what fate it might have suffered in the upheaval of the Revolution, when desperate fighting took place in the streets of Petersburg and many great buildings were burnt to the ground. Before leaving England I was unable to attain any accurate information on the matter. Some said that all the pictures had been taken to Moscow, others that the smaller works of art had been looted. Definite official information was not to be had.

The facts are that both the building and its contents are intact and have never been so well attended to, displayed, and studied as they are now. It is true that they passed through perilous adventures. When there appeared to be an imminent possibility that the German armies would reach Petersburg all the treasures of the Hermitage were packed in boxes, loaded on trains, and sent to Moscow, where

they were stored in the Imperial Apartments in the Kremlin. Danger pursued them there when the Kremlin was bombarded by the Bolshevists. The whole mass of packing cases had to be hastily removed to the ground floor and mixed up with a chaos of Palace Treasures. At the end of 1920 the Hermitage Collections were carried back to Petersburg, unpacked, and returned to their places. It is asserted that after all these movements and risks nothing was damaged.

A word must be said about the history of the building and the collections within it before we come to present-day conditions. The Winter Palace was built by the bank of the Neva, over against Peter the Great's fortress of St. Peter and St. Paul, about the middle of the eighteenth century. Close alongside of it Catherine II built the first Hermitage, a long narrow building, endwise to the river, connected by a bridge with the Palace, and including a garden raised on vaults with a narrow gallery on either side and some rooms at each end. She issued orders that every visitor who entered it must "leave his title, his hat, and his sword outside." A few years later she built an additional wing of buildings along the river-front joining her first Hermitage. This wing contained some apartments, which in later years were placed at the disposal of visiting sovereigns, the last person to occupy them being President Loubet. Another bridge over a street links this wing with a charming little theatre which Catherine



A RHYTON IN THE HERMITAGE FROM THE SEVEN BROTHERS TUMULUS.

*Circa 5th Cent. B.C.*





caused to be built yet farther along the river-front. Regarding the two Hermitages thus standing at right-angles to one another as two sides of a rectangle, the remainder of the space was occupied by houses. These were pulled down and the large rectangle was completed by Nicholas I. The work was finished in 1852. The name Hermitage is now applied to the whole great Museum thus constructed. Since the Revolution the Winter Palace itself has been added to the rest, so that now there are said to be here united together galleries which, if stretched out in one line, would measure some ten miles in total length! The whole building covers an area of ground about as large as the Louvre and with a much smaller proportion of courtyards. Architecturally it is inferior, being a brick structure of no great pretensions save for its huge porch with ten colossal granite caryatides, each nearly 20 feet high. ✓

The picture collection was begun by Peter the Great, but the real founder of the Gallery was Catherine II. She bought both individual pictures and complete private collections, including that formed by Sir Robert Walpole at Houghton Hall. Later Tsars also purchased pictures *en bloc*. Recent large acquisitions and the space gained by the addition of the Winter Palace are involving the rearrangement of all the collections. This process, indeed, which of necessity must be put in hand in every Russian Museum, is not being pursued in any haphazard fashion. The whole problem has been

the subject of very careful investigation. The reader must bear in mind that the secularization of the monasteries and of much ecclesiastical and private property places at the disposal of the Government both buildings and works of art and antiquity. As already stated some of the monasteries are becoming museums of ecclesiastical art, one of this period, another of another. Great houses may be set aside as special museums, as for example of furniture, porcelain, textiles, or what you please. There are also museums for small towns to be considered, and even for villages. The problem is obviously very complicated and has to be considered as a whole. I am told that an elaborate scheme has been prepared. They estimate that upward of thirty years will be required to carry it out completely.

The rearrangement of the Hermitage is actually in hand and many of the galleries are of necessity closed to the public. It was therefore not by the front door that I used to find my way in but by a side entrance giving access to the offices of the staff. A staircase led thence to the Committee Room, through which one went into a long gallery, copied in form and decoration from the Vatican Loggie, and so into the great Spanish Picture Gallery. I used often to linger in the Committee Room for the sake of a glass case containing various mounted crystal and other precious vases and ornaments. A very massive bowl, cup, and jug, hollowed out of mother of amethyst, looked to me to be barbarian

work. Its date, however, is quite problematical and may even be late mediaeval, but there was something very attractive about these objects and I looked at them almost daily without arriving at any definite conclusion. A beautiful lapis lazuli jug with an enamelled human face below the spout is refined French work of the sixteenth century; it forms a pair with another in the Galerie d'Apollon in the Louvre. Here also is a hollow crystal dragon of the same date, and there are many more the like treasures, most of them purchased by Catherine II. All that are shown in this case are but a small fraction of hundreds, indeed I think they said thousands, of such costly objects which are stored away in cases and will some day be unpacked and exhibited. A small hemispherical crystal bowl set on a turned metal stem, of later date, bears the following inscription engraved round the lip, "Usibus Anna Clivius Henr. VIII Reg. Angl. uxoris Ao. 1540," and a badge of a flower. How Anne of Cleves' cup came to Russia is not recorded.

We must, however, no longer delay on the threshold of the picture gallery, but forthwith boldly enter. Here, then, we are in the great Spanish Room with huge vases, tables, and candelabra of lapis lazuli down the middle of it and comfortable seats, whereon resting and being alone I could smoke my pipe and look happily about me. Of course the once so popular Murillo is in the ascendant with his Miraculous Conceptions and his Sevillian children.

He also contributes an Adoration of the Shepherds in Rembrandtesque illumination to show how much better Rembrandt would have done it. His prettiest picture is of the Child Christ who has pricked his finger while twisting up in play a circlet of thorns. Several of his pictures here are large and empty, but no one can deny the merit of his big Titianesque "Rest by the Way," with its good composition, warm chiaroscuro, and decorative landscape. Velazquez is but indifferently represented. Ribera powerfully illuminates a half-nude Evangelist. Pereda supplies remarkable still-lives, and Zurbaran gives us a delightful glimpse of a sweet little Virgin prayerfully neglecting her needlework. The great Greco does not here flash upon us with any of his later lightning-illuminated visions, but quietly masters our admiration with a solemn and monumental half-length of Peter and Paul all done in grey and brown. Lastly let me mention a low-toned picture attributed to A. Puga. It shows a man sharpening a sword and others looking on in absorbed interest—apparently very simple work, but it arrested me every time I passed by and consoled me for the fatigue of the Murillos.

Next in order comes the great Italian Room with its malachite vases and tables. A large and brilliant Tiepolo of Cleopatra's Feast occupies the centre of one long wall and hangs between two of the best big pictures Canaletto ever painted. I was specially entertained by the animated and populous represen-



tation of the Reception of the French Ambassador, Count Gergi, at the Doge's Palace. It happened that I had just been reading Sir Henry Wotton's account of his reception, and here was a complete illustration of his entertaining letter. It is the second day of the ceremonial. Gilt barges with the ambassador's arms painted on them have fetched him and his company in procession from his house. They are landing on the quay and each member of the Embassy is accompanied by a Senator. Crowds stand at a respectful distance on either side and gaily dressed folk look down from the balcony and windows of the Doge's Palace. One feels that exactly thus must Venice have looked in the days of her splendour, the like of which we, alas! will nowhere in this world behold.

Truth to tell, most of the pictures in this stately gallery are large rather than great. Thus Francia, Ridolfo, Botticini, Bonifazio, Sebastiano del Piombo, Guercino, Domenichino, Salvator and Caravaggio are all characteristically but not very attractively represented. Guido's Christ in the arms of Joseph with an angel leading the Virgin's donkey in the background is one of the simplest and most charming pictures, and I should have liked his "Virgin at School" with a number of girls if they had not been made to look so demonstratively pious. Whose taste is responsible for there being so many Garofalos is not disclosed. One, at any rate, was bought by Peter the Great. At the end of the room is a large

and splendid landscape with two nude Giorgionesque figures in the foreground, attributed, but not unanimously, to Schiavone. It is evening and the light flows low down over the blue hills. A romantic spirit pervades the view, which is indeed not of the everyday world but of a happy dreamland only to be disclosed by the imaginative vision of an artist. There are also Titians in this room, among them a superb St. Sebastian, and there is a Palma man's portrait, but we will not linger over them, for the best in this kind await us in the adjacent small cabinets. Let us forthwith enter the row of eight which are close at hand.

Looking down through the succession of doors by the window wall the eye is at once attracted to a screen with a small picture upon it jutting out into the passage-way. It draws us like some glittering jewel, and no wonder, for this is Raphael's Madonna Connestabile. It is a tiny *tondo* about 6 inches in diameter and one of the loveliest things of its kind in the world. The carved and gilt frame originally formed part of the panel on which the picture was painted, but as that had to be transferred to canvas the medallion was of necessity sawn out. When the wood had been removed and the back of the film of paint was revealed the original outline of the group was found to agree with an existing pen and ink design. Lovers of art know this picture from photographs. They know exactly what to expect and it fulfils every expectation. Such was the delicate

and pure world of fancy in which the youthful Raphael dreamed. On the back of the screen hangs the same artist's "St. George with a Sword" and wearing the order of the Garter. He painted it in 1506 for his patron Guidobaldo of Urbino to send as a present to Henry VII, who had honoured him with that order. The little kneeling Princess closely resembles our St. Catherine in the National Gallery. The landscape background is curiously Flemish and seems to prove that the painter had been looking at some picture by Memling and had borrowed from him his trees and a tower.

It is the fashion nowadays to speak lightly of Raphael's art. I am sufficiently old-fashioned to find in these two little pictures joy of a quality which no other painter in the world, nor Raphael himself in his maturer years, avails to supply. Other artists may be as great or greater if you please, but none is greater in this kind. On the opposite wall is his Alba Madonna, painted when he first went to Rome and was beginning to lose the freshness of his early charm. The sculptured marble group of the "Dead Boy on a Dolphin" occupies the centre of the room. The boy is from the same model as the Child in the Sistine Madonna. After living for thirty years with a cast of this group in my house I remain assured that, while there is small reason for thinking the model to have been actually shaped by the hand of Raphael, the design is rightly to be ascribed to him. In the same room are yet

other treasures which I can only name: a lovely Virgin and Child with St. John by Correggio, a man's portrait by Bacchiacca, a Holy Family by Andrea del Sarto, the attractive "Colombina" now attributed to Luini, and a yet more delightful Virgin and Child which shows him at his best with reminiscences both of Borgognone and Leonardo.

The next cabinet is made illustrious by the Benois Madonna, a genuine Leonardo, which nobly replaces the three pictures in this gallery formerly falsely attributed to him. It is the last great acquisition of the Hermitage under a Tsar's regime. The Madonna Litta, now attributed to a pupil of his, is one of the disestablished. The little Filippino roundel hanging on the back of the same screen delighted me much more with its graceful Virgin in a garden and pretty angels kneeling or floating about her—a thing full of a pure and delicate fancy possible for only a few brief years when the Renaissance was dawning. A small Simone Martini, as it were embroidered in gold, a predella-piece by Botticelli, a Crucifixion triptych by Perugino, a small painted shrine (lacking its sculptured figure) by Fra Angelico, and a big Cima that in some ways approximates to Carpaccio, exemplify but do not exhaust the noteworthy paintings that hang together in this little room.

Returning to the Cabinet through which we entered from the great Italian Gallery we may now have leisure to regard a St. George and the Dragon

by Tintoret, resembling but not rivalling a similar picture in the National Gallery, and a portrait of Cardinal Pole by Sebastiano del Piombo; but far superior to these and, in fact, one of the greatest treasures of the Hermitage is Giorgione's Judith—a graceful full-length figure, clothed in his own Venetian tone of pink, standing near a dark tree, and relieved against a decorative blue landscape. The grace of this figure needs not my praise. It was admired by Veronese, who borrowed from it the nude leg from the knee downward and the surrounding drapery, as any visitor can see who passes into the next cabinet and examines the Pietà by the junior artist. Beside it he will see a Madonna obviously copied by an almost contemporary artist from a lost picture by Giorgione, exemplifying his purity, simplicity, and repose in marked contrast to the carnal splendours and *bravura* technique of Titian's Venus and his Mary Magdalene which hang near by, matching as they do and triumphantly illustrating the victorious paganism of the full Renaissance. Domenichino's effeminate St. John rules over the next cabinet and is surrounded by Procaccinis, Albanis, and such like. Carlo Dolci follows, but he and his contemporaries are thrown in the shade by Domenico Feti's compelling portrait of an individual, who might be a Don Quixote, and Caravaggio's Mandoline-player, both painters being elsewhere in the gallery distinguished by remarkable pictures.



The Cabinet devoted to Flemish Primitives is not far away. Two famous Van Eycks capture attention the moment they come in view. One is a pair of wings with a Crucifixion and a Last Judgment, both thronged with a multitude of little figures. The central panel, an Adoration of the Magi, is known to have been in existence not so very many decades ago and may yet some day come to light. The heads in the Crucifixion resemble those in the burnt Turin Manuscript. There is a very detailed landscape background, including a snow-mountain which I venture to identify as Monte Rosa, with its Nordend, Dufour Spitze, and Signalkuppe, and the Lyskamm showing over from behind. A city to represent Jerusalem is in the middle distance, but in no respect does it resemble the actual city, whereas in the "Three Maries" in Sir Herbert Cook's collection, the true general aspect of the Holy City is conveyed. If my contention is accepted that Hubert van Eyck must have visited the Holy Land before painting that picture it will follow that the Hermitage wings were made before his pilgrimage. As I looked from these wings to the Annunciation hanging beside them I felt that beyond question here was the handiwork of an utterly different kind of man. Both could not possibly be the production of one and the same artist even if we assume years to have intervened between the painting of them. The wings are by the elder brother Hubert, the Annunciation is by John. Those are full of emotion, the work of a lover and

student of nature; the Annunciation accredits a calm observer of human nature and an analyst of character. Neither Virgin nor Angel possesses formal beauty, but they are gloriously painted and so is every detail of the elaborate surrounding architecture, the tiled floor, the jewelled brocade, and all the rest. Nowhere so well as in the Hermitage does the Van Eyck problem receive so convincing a solution.

Two small pictures by Robert Campin, the so-called Maître de Flemalle, are spoiled by hideous red-patterned borders which render it almost impossible to appreciate their merit. A version of Roger van der Weyden's "St. Luke painting the Virgin" is one of at least three examples claiming to be the original. It is possible that all may have come out of the master's workshop. A large "Virgin in Glory" by Jan Prevost is interesting as an authentic picture by an artist who occupied an important position at Bruges in his day, but it is not a joy-giving work of art. If from it I received little satisfaction the disappointment was counterbalanced by unexpected pleasure afforded by a new acquisition of which I had not heard, to wit, an early German Christ as Judge with the Virgin, St. John, and curly-headed angels naively and charmingly painted in very primitive style against a gold background. I only know the work of Meister Franke of Hamburg from photographs, but they prepare me to think well of the suggestion that connects his name, or at least his influence, with this delightful panel.

The best that Mabuse could do is not exemplified in his large "Descent from the Cross," nor does the "Healing of the Blind" show Lucas van Leyden to great advantage. If that is his last picture it consoles me for his early death. Mere mention must suffice for works by Bernard van Orley, Lucidel, and Pourbus. There are several meritorious Antonio Mors, the most interesting to an Englishman being the portraits of Sir Thomas Gresham (a grave man, judicially observant) and of his wife. Contemporary with and after him for a century or so came a number of portrait-painters, honest craftsmen, who made that kind of mechanical imprint of the aspect of men and women which corresponds to the photograph of to-day. We need not linger over them. All the Bruegels here are poor; there is nothing by the immortal founder of the family. Aertsen's "Christ healing the Sick" made me realize how much better Old Peter would have handled the same subject. Cranach as a painter rarely appeals to me, save at Berlin, but a large fragment of a Madonna picture here possesses a certain charm. It is a harmony in blues and greens—blue sky, blue dress, and a green vine—so pleasing to the eye that one wishes the whole panel had been preserved in exchange for, say, fifty wearisome repetitions issued from the Cranach workshop. A man's portrait by Hans Holbein's brother Brosy is important by rarity and association. It confirms the justice of the father in his family group where he points an emphatic finger

at his younger son. A good landscape heavy with trees is one of two paintings by the always interesting Elsheimer. Momper's landscapes are also desirable and there is one here which may be described as half-way toward Rubens, and another as about equally removed from Patinir.

I must, however, resist the temptation to linger over these painters of transitional landscapes which are of more interest to specialist students than to the general amateur, for the great Rembrandt awaits us with a series of his finest works, a group probably unrivalled in any other picture-gallery in the world. Forty-two pictures in the Hermitage are attributed to him and of these about thirty-eight are accepted as genuine. How shall I give the reader any idea of these wonderful treasures, for I cannot delay even merely to name them, and who shall translate their majesty into words?

The first that held me spellbound depicts a woman awaiting her lover. You do not see him, but she can, and he is near at hand. Her face is both grave and glad with expectation breaking into realization. Every magic of light is cast about her. The flesh contrasting with the white linen is as triumphantly painted as ever by Titian. Every accessory of luxury is displayed or implied—rich hangings, golden cherub-carvings, embroidered table-cloth, jewelled slippers—the whole bathed in a kind of mystical atmosphere which carries it above the merely carnal on to a transcendental plane. Turn the head and

we face a Crucifixion, the most traditional of all subjects, but painted as though for the first time imagined, so vivid is the impression, so personal each face, even the most shadowy.

A series of portraits follows: grave men—one very old with knotted, folded hands and expression of fixed foreboding, and an aged Rabbi tremulous in the uncertainties of senility—two or three admirable old women, beside Rembrandt's mother, who passes twice before us enveloped in her son's reverence and love. There is Saskia also, whom we all know as well by sight as if she had been our own sister. The brilliancy of youth is yet more perfectly manifested in that immortal Housemaid with her broomstick, leaning forth from the dark on folded arms, worshipful as any Empress in her rich humanity. Here comes Titus, dear Titus, always a joy to meet, obviously his father's greatest treasure; and near him is the man, like one at Glasgow, in a helmet glittering out of surrounding gloom. I will also cite the portrait of a magnificent Pole with a great head-dress, and the fire of costly jewels shining out of the multitudinousness of his elaborate attire; but with all this emphasis of setting the man himself yet dominates the whole. Two canvasses, one small, the other large, relate the story of the Prodigal's return. In the earlier, he comes back richly attired with a fine tunic, sword and baldric; in the other, he comes in rags and tatters, his mother dim in the background, his brothers unsympathetically looking on,



but in both the father's protecting love fills all one's vision—painting triumphant in this latter, making the rags as comforting to the eyes as ever were the finest brocades. How, I wonder, did Rembrandt avail to endow with dignity Abraham carving a leg of mutton for the Three Angels whom he regards with a puzzled expression while performing the duties of hospitality?

At the risk of wearying the reader I cannot pass unmentioned the Holy Family in which the Mother's loving wonder at her child is not so much individual as obviously emblematic of all mother's love in the world. The cherubs come wondering, but with how great a difference in kind! As for the Babe in the cradle, sleeping and radiating light, it is the immortal infant of all ages and countries. The hard-working and, as it would seem, unimaginative father is dimly to be discerned chopping wood in the background, the unobtrusive but efficient force that keeps the family nourished, clothed, and housed. Let these examples suffice as representative of the larger number, which in mercy to the reader I omit to name. I will only in conclusion remind him of two more Rembrandts which the confiscation of the Stróganov collections has added to the pictures controlled by the State. One is the small landscape I have described in another place; the second is a picture of a young monk, dated 1666, which shows a grave face emerging from a brown cowl in the midst of, as it were, a chorus and harmony of browns.

The Rembrandts in the Hermitage hang on screens between the windows in a long room. The wall opposite the windows is devoted to the master's followers—Bol, Eeckhout, Flink, Maes, A. de Gelder and so forth. I found it impossible to look at them with greater works so near at hand, for Rembrandt's vitalizing power enfeebles his imitators by contrast. He rises above them all into a nobler region where even beggars are monumental and each individual a type of mankind. Only two pictures captured and held my attention: an unattributed painting of a Family at table saying grace—full of simple reverence and charmingly painted—and a still-life study of onions, grey glass, paper, and pewter against a grey wall painted by Pauditz and dated 1660. I could have believed it to be the work of Chardin.

If we had gone straight on from the Spanish and Italian galleries we should have come into the third great gallery. We avoided it by turning aside through the small and more attractive cabinets which led us directly to the Rembrandts. We must now retrace our steps to the third great gallery, which is devoted to the Flemish masters of the seventeenth century, especially Rubens and Van Dyck. If the Hermitage surpasses all other galleries in its Rembrandts, it rivals even Munich with its fifty Rubens, while its thirty-two Van Dycks illustrate that artist in every phase of his career. I will neither describe nor even make a mere list of the mythological and religious subjects and portraits which here exemplify the great

Antwerp master, only pointing out that the expulsion of Hagar with its angry woman and barking dog, though a wonder of skilful painting, cannot rival Rembrandt in vivid illustration of dramatic incident. I must also at least draw attention to two of his rare and precious landscapes—the Rainbow, and the Waggon stuck in the mire. Those who are familiar with landscapes of the Patinir type and who have followed the slow growth of landscape art in the hands of sixteenth-century painters will not fail to note the survival of the Patinir tradition manifested in the general design of landscapes by Rubens, especially those painted before his last period. But though the type survives how different is the treatment! Earlier painters laboriously worked out their far-reaching vistas, detail by detail. Rubens tosses and sweeps his paint on to the canvas, but out of it emerge the broad distances, the gnarled trees, the rushing waters, and the tumultuous sky, all the old elements freshly combined and invigorated.

It is, however, not these finished pictures but a large number of sketch designs in oils which are Rubens' contribution of special interest to the Gallery of the Hermitage. They include designs for the altar-piece of St. Ildefonso at Vienna, for some of the paintings at the Luxembourg, for the ceiling at Whitehall, and for the triumphal arches raised at Antwerp for the entry of the Cardinal Infante Ferdinand in 1635. Some of these sketches come from the Walpole collection. They are examples of

the artist's exuberant fancy—here according with practical architectural needs, there sheer freaks of impossibility. The vivacity of some is extraordinary, for example where War is bursting forth from a doorway which Isabella closes. These elaborate and semi-architectural conceits are poured forth with as much ease as fecundity. There is no repetition. Friezes, *Putti*, statues, pediments, pictures passing into sculptured decoration, groups of figures which may be alive or may represent statues, and everywhere the wonderfulest play of colour, splashed on, and yet delicate, with a boldness and at the same time rightness which it is useless to criticize, for it excites wonder and praise.

While Rubens in the Hermitage thus astonishes, Van Dyck is displayed in his most attractive moods. The best of his pictures came from the Walpole collection. Among them are, of course, a Charles I and a Henrietta Maria, looking about as far removed from Puritan sympathies as any human being could be. There is an Isabella Brandt, a beautiful portrait supposed to have been done as a present for Rubens before Van Dyck's Italian journey. There is also a wonderful family group of the same early period and a portrait of Susannah Fourment with a little girl, but the most delightful picture of all and the one whose loss to England excites the keenest regret is the three-quarter length of Lord Wharton as a shepherd—that aristocratic youth, the aspect of whose agreeable face does not foretell the tumultuous

and somewhat inglorious future that lay before him. Portraits of members of the same family are here also, but none of them can for a moment be put in comparison with this.

After such distinguished works the Denners and Mengses in the next room repel rather than attract. They lead on to an ample series of works by Dutchmen of the seventeenth century. Portraits by the elder and younger Frans Hals, Terburgs, Metsus, de Hooghs, good examples of normal types, Jan Steens and Ostades: among the latter a large and wonderful winter landscape, with sledges and horses and folk, and one of summer-time to balance it. There are Cuyps and Wouvermans galore—three walls covered with them. Ruysdael is richly represented, as for instance by the *Sandy Path* of 1646, famed and worthy of its fame, and by a hamlet among trees with gathering clouds. The downright Potter reveals himself as not devoid of sentiment in a farm-house door with cows, sheep, horses and goats gathered about it, and far-away meadows all infused with the repose of evening. Among many Aert van der Neers I noted especially a *Windmill and Village on the Maas*, certainly to be regarded as one of his best productions. Now come Van Goyens, le Ducs, and a group of portraits by Van der Helst, notably a stolid life-size *Host and Hostess* receiving visitors but without the smallest trace of emotion or grace of recognition.

In the next room the floor was strewn with pictures,



patterned about experimentally for hanging, and with a number tilted up one against another. Here were Pynackers, Mierises, Maeses, Berchems and delightful Brouwers, but the evening was cloudy and the room none too bright, so that there was not light enough to see them. I passed on accordingly into the next room, where Snyders emblazoned his birds, Jordaens unveiled his drunken King, and Teniers in one of his most comprehensive paintings displayed the revels of a *Kermesse*. These pictures also stood about in temporary confusion. The room beyond contained a few English pictures, Knellers, Reynoldses, Romneys of second-rate importance, but there is a half-length of a lady by Gainsborough, painted in the loose and very effective style of his later days, and there is also a lady by Raeburn whose face brilliantly emerges from the cleverly sketched and vaguely indicated surroundings.

Finally I came to the French pictures, which are here better represented than the English. I suppose that in the ultimate re-arrangement the other groups of pictures of the same school, which I elsewhere saw and have described, will be hung with these to make an important *ensemble*. I was delighted to meet three Le Nains, one with seven figures of common folk in a row in all the dignity of old clothes; another with the incomparable donkey which finds place in many other pictures and looks as though he had been a family pet. Among the Poussins I will name a big classical landscape with towers,

rocks, and a giant Polyphemus forming the summit of a peak. He is playing on huge pipes but no one seems to be giving him the least attention. Several Claudes, with the usual trees, buildings, or ruins projected against an illumined sky, are reckoned among his most successful works. If I were allowed to choose one I would certainly take the Emmaus Road. The Watteaus do not compare with those in Berlin, but there is a delightful guitar-player in good clothes on a stone seat in a corner, whose gaiety seems imbued with a certain pathos; a group of pretty ladies show their very pretty backs. A party of gipsies boiling their pot forms an entertaining group, but I think they are aristocratic folk acting at a picnic. Pictures by Lancret and Pater hang close by and display by contrast how easily Watteau is himself and how far below him with all their striving they remain. A Child building with Cards and yet one more version of the Child saying Grace, whereof so many exist, pleasingly represent the art of Chardin. Fragonard paints a terrified girl from whom her lover has stolen a kiss behind the door, but the old people are intent on their card-game and it is all right. Boucher, Greuze, Gerard, and David failed to arrest my loitering steps. The galleries had long been empty and silence reigned in all. Before returning to my hotel I wandered across the bridge into the First Hermitage, past a gallery all dishung and the garden of Catherine II, and the empty gallery where the portraits of all the Romanov family used to hang.

Another bridge took me into the Winter Palace and the rooms inhabited by Catherine II. My footsteps echoed hollow in the dead silence and there were too many ghosts. I turned my back on them after a last look at the Connestabile Madonna and emerged into the calm evening by the margin of the Neva.

## ARCHAEOLOGY

The treasures of art in Russia which make the greatest popular appeal are its picture-galleries, its Palaces, its ecclesiastical monuments, and in general all that it has so richly inherited and acquired from Renaissance and later times. But for the student of the history of human civilization, that is to say of the advance of man from a state of primeval savagery to such higher spiritual, intellectual, and physical attainments as the human race has thus far reached, Russia possesses memorials rarer and more important. Her soil has yielded up to the spade of the archaeologist characteristic products of the work of man, far away back through the Iron and Bronze Ages to the early ages of stone implements. Tribe after tribe and race after race have followed one another in different parts of the Russian Empire's vast extent. Creative centres of civilization have sprung into activity north, south, and east, at different times. Floods of population have passed this way and that, submerging or replacing stagnant or outworn peoples.

These movements are sometimes mentioned or

described in written history, but oftener can only be inferred from the evidence afforded by the contents of their graves. What the earth yields archaeologists have to interpret; the interpretation may well demand long study, much comparison of this with that, and the flair of genius in some widely comprehending and informed mind. Numerous learned and able Russian archaeologists have devoted their lives to this kind of study. They have learned to recognize the handiwork of many localities and to assign dates to this and the other kind of product. By comparison of the discoveries in one part of the country with those in others, they have identified the arts of different tribes and shown the displacements of the homes of unstable peoples and the order in which they have succeeded one another. The carefully organized, catalogued, and named collections of antiquities of all dates which Russia possesses are therefore both large and comprehensive. It would require not a chapter but many volumes to describe them, and such a description, if of any serious value, would in fact be a history of art in the Russian Empire from the Stone Ages down to mediaeval times. I shall make no attempt even to sketch this panoramic picture, but must confine myself to little more than briefest mention of such outstanding antiquities of successive ages as I was able to note in the rapid and superficial study of the Museums visited by me during the few days at my disposal. I shall confine my observations to the



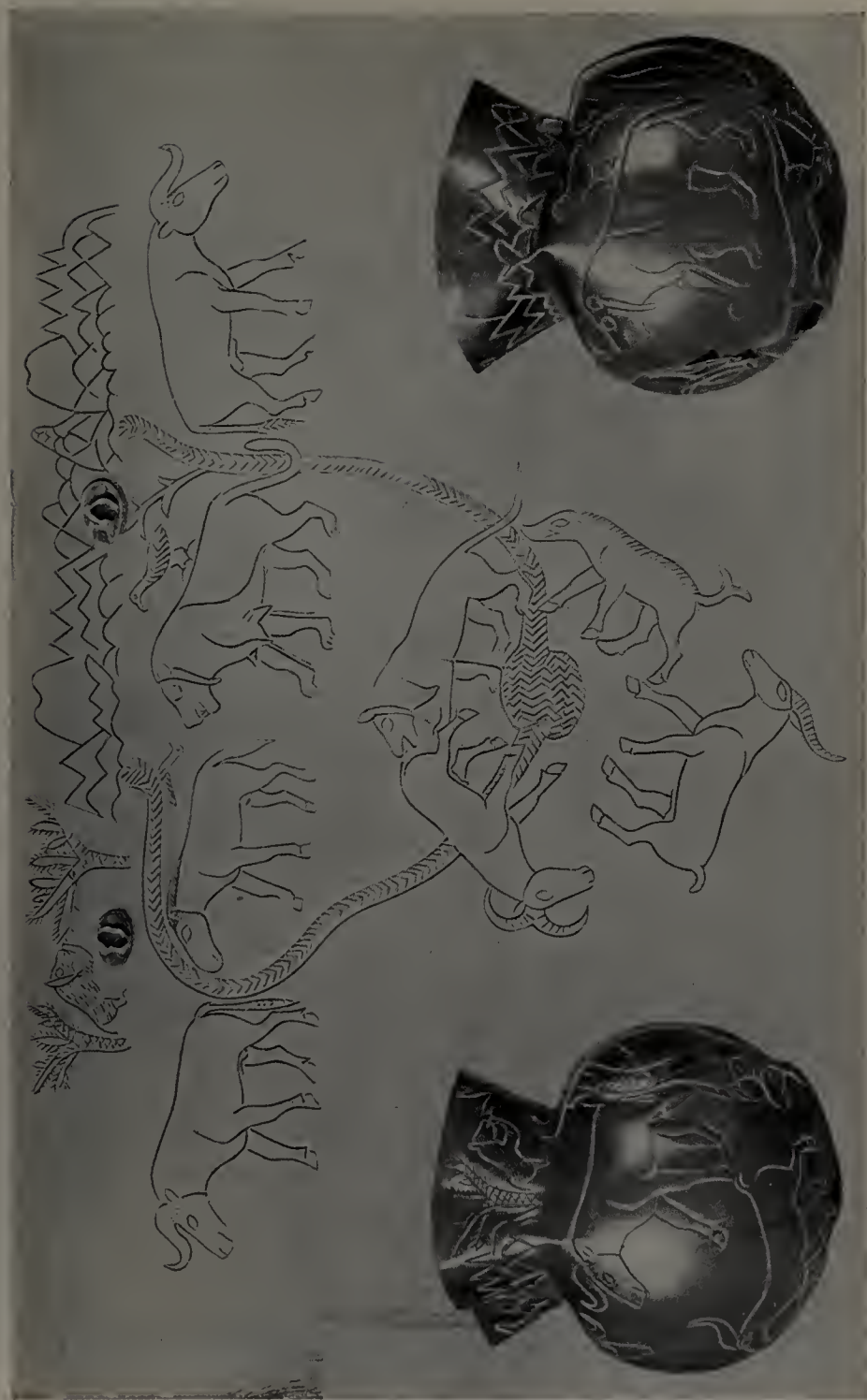
archaeological collections in the Historical Museum at Moscow and the Hermitage at Petersburg.

The Historical Museum is, I think, in one sense the best organized in the world. Every object or group of objects belonging together (such as the contents of a single grave) is photographed. The photograph is pasted on to a numbered card on which all the essential related facts are recorded, and the cards are arranged in drawers according to a lucid principle in the form of a card catalogue. The student can turn through this catalogue and find whatever object or class of objects he wishes to study. He has only to take the numbers from the cards and fill up a demand form, when the objects themselves will be brought to him. I was invited to test the efficiency of the arrangement. I turned through a drawer of cards and fixed on an item I would call for. The number was handed to an attendant, and within two minutes he brought me a tray to which the required object was attached in company with others belonging to the same find. There are hundreds of these trays which slide into cabinets and are thus accessible. Selected examples of every period and type are exhibited in show-cases in large galleries where they can be inspected by any visitor; but these are only a fraction of the vast collection, the bulk of which has necessarily to be stored away. Nowhere else, so far as I know, are objects (of necessity hidden) made so easily available to the student who, by the photographs, can quickly dis-

cover their existence, and by the numbers can as quickly obtain access to them.

The Treasure of Maikop (Kuban district) is probably the most ancient discovered in South Russia. It belongs to the latest Stone Age and is roughly attributed to the fourth millennium B.C. A single grave contained the whole of it—silver vessels engraved with beasts and designs, bulls modelled in solid gold, and a great many small golden lions *passant*, modelled in relief and intended to be sewn on to garments as a decoration. Analogies may be traced or imagined with earliest Egyptian or Chaldean work, not, however, resulting from any direct influence but arising out of a common stage of civilization. There is also a very remarkable silver vessel with a rude representation, engraved in outline, of the great Caucasian range of mountains as seen from the north. The peaks of Elbruz, Uzhba, and Kazbek are easily identifiable with the Kuban and Terek rivers flowing from them. Whether this design be regarded as a picture or a map it is by thousands of years earlier than any other representation of individual mountains known to us.<sup>1</sup> A group of pottery, called of Tripolye, a site 40 miles below Kiev, also belongs to the so-called Eneolithic Age—the transitional period between the Ages of Stone and Bronze. There are tall urns, hemispherical below, with the lip opening out like an inverted bell and with handles attached

<sup>1</sup> Vide *Materials for the Archaeology of Russia*, Vol. 34, pl. 25.



GOLDEN VASE FROM MAIKOP-IN THE HERMITAGE. ABOUT 3000 B.C.



to the sides from which the vessel could be slung, and there are pots of other forms and smaller size. They are covered with a polychrome decoration of spirals, which here long antedate the spirals of Egypt and Crete. There are also pots with engraved female and beast figures—goats, dogs, and so forth—in red and black rudely made and resembling others found in Central Asia.

By a freak of nature some fragments of a still brightly coloured stuff were preserved in a tomb also in the Kuban district and may be seen at Moscow. They date from the very beginning of the Bronze Age and excite surprise by the rarity of their adventurous survival in such condition. Middle Russia and Siberia as well as the Caucasian lands are richly represented throughout the whole age of bronze. Let me instance the circular Siberian bronze mirrors, so resemblant to those preserved in China from a remote antiquity, which form the earliest link between the farthest East and lands connected with the West. Such mirrors are also found in Scythian graves. A conical helmet, made out of one piece of very thin bronze sewn up through holes pierced at the edge, comes from the Caucasus and is of very early date. The rarity of iron at its first introduction is shown by its use for decorative inlay in bronze objects, which may date as far back as the twelfth century B.C. A precious series of antiquities from near Lake Van in high Armenia displays a combination of Egyptian and Assyrian influences and com-



forts the archaeologist with informative inscriptions. A bronze god standing on a squatting bull delighted me; so did the winged bull from the Uvarov collection. A quantity of black pottery, with white bone-paste rubbed into engraved outlines, is characteristic of the period and forms a link with known kinds in other localities.

It was not however these curious relics of the past but the golden treasures of the Scythians that I was most impatient to behold. Their graves in South Russia are known to have yielded great multitudes of ornaments cast or wrought in solid gold, many of which have been described and figured in official and other publications. Rumour roughly stated their number at about 10,000. When the world was staggered by the news of the appalling Russian Revolution, archaeologists everywhere trembled for the fate of these unique treasures and imagined them scattered abroad and passing into the melting-pot. I am, I believe, correct in asserting that not a single specimen has been lost, stolen, sold, or melted down. I could not, of course, see and identify every item in the great collection in the Hermitage, but, fairly familiar as I was with the published material, I can only say that every object known to me from reproductions and for which I inquired was promptly produced. I unfortunately forgot to ask about the fate of the Nelidov and Uvarov collections, and I am not aware that I saw any objects belonging to them. The Scythian collection was at

the time of my visit in process of rearrangement and was not in its old cases, but all the important parts of it were specially brought out and arranged for my inspection in a private room. They were laid out on a great table covered with a rich red brocade which splendidly displayed the wonderful mass of golden ornaments closely grouped all over it. They included not only, or even mainly, the barbarous creations of Scythian goldsmiths, but also the priceless works of Greek artificers of the great days, made for Scythian purchasers, as well as golden treasures of many ancient times and lands, including examples from Siberia in the Iron and even the Bronze Ages and the later productions of Sarmatian and Gothic craftsmen.

The Scythian antiquities may go back as far as the tenth century B.C., the earliest of them known being perhaps bronze mirrors of simple character, but it is at Minusinsk in Siberia that we shall find the origin of the style in the Bronze Ages. We must, however, come down almost to the sixth century for any considerable display of definitely Scythian treasure. The earliest notable group in the Hermitage is the Melgunov treasure, which was found in 1763 before the days of accurate record; it includes a famous gold scabbard embossed with a frieze of animals showing strong Assyrian influence, also a diadem set with onyx, many golden birds and other animals embossed in thin gold. The deer of Kostromskaya with his complicated horns, the well-

known lion with the sloping legs, and all the curious objects made accessible to English students in the pages of Minns' *Scythians and Greeks*—all are here. Caucasian Kasbek sends, among much more, an inscribed silver bowl with bronze stag-head ornaments and chains; also figures that seem to preserve a Hittite tradition—one with a bronze head and an iron body. There is a peculiar helmet with a sort of pudding-shaped ornament a-top. A slender Janus-headed figure of later date from Grozny is noteworthy, but merely to name such things does not much avail. Admirable goldsmiths worked for the Achaemenian monarchs of Persia. The Treasure of the Oxus, a highly prized possession of the British Museum, has made their work known to such lovers of beautiful things as avail themselves of the opportunities that surround them. The Hermitage is also rich in examples of the Persian school. I will cite only a gold sword-handle decorated with a row of hunters and their game, most delicately wrought, which came from Chertomlyk, and a beautiful collar with the two ends of it fashioned into the form of winged beasts into which garnets and other bright stones or enamels were inlaid between gold cloisons—a type of decoration which the Goths in after years carried all over Western Europe. Notable also are some rhytons, or drinking horns, large and small. One of silver terminates in the finely modelled head of a wild goat. Others are of gold.

The contents of the fabulously rich group of



A RHYTON IN THE HERMITAGE, PROBABLY FROM SIBERIA.





barrows known to fame as the Seven Brothers, the Nymphæum, Kul-Oba, and Great Bliznitsa, illustrate with unique completeness the finest work of the Ionian goldsmiths in the sixth, fifth and fourth centuries B.C., but they are too well known to call for more than brief reference. From the Seven Brothers we have many necklaces of delicate workmanship and ornaments stamped in relief on thin gold plates for attachment to costumes, besides engraved silver cylices of the fifth century and notably a tray with the figures of a bearded man and two little girls relieved in gold against the silver background. I need no more than name the splendid vases from Chertomlyk and Kul-Oba. Porringers from Artyukhov's barrow, a finely modelled rhyton in the form of a calf's head, golden wreaths—one of olive sprays with berries most delicately fashioned—such are a few of the treasures that passed all too swiftly before my eyes. I should not be forgiven if I forgot to mention the highly embossed circular medallions, ornaments for a lady's head, for which the goldsmith borrowed the design from Pheidias' head of Athene Parthenos. In execution they are faultless on their tiny scale. Others that group with them are no less minute in detail and demand amplification by a strong glass for their appreciation as it seems they must have needed for their making. The glorious golden comb, crested with figures of horsemen perfectly modelled in the round, attracted widest attention when it was discovered in 1913.

It exemplifies the most perfect work of Greek goldsmiths of the best period. I held it in my hand with delight and parted from it as a lover from his mistress.

There was great activity among Greek goldsmiths about and immediately after the days of Alexander the Great, at which time Oriental influences manifested themselves in the work of Mediterranean artificers. A dome-shaped golden helmet or crown of this period was found at Ak-burun near Kerch with two gold cups, and a gold-leaf diadem, and some little ornaments like bells. The helmet is in bold open-work of acanthus leaves and rams' horns, a thing of Assyrian flavour unique of its kind. Glad was I to behold it, for thirty years ago I bought a gilt electrotype of it and fashioned it into a lamp which lights my study to the present day. The famous silver vase of Nicopol, which came from the Chertomlyk barrow, is of the same period. It depicts in high reliefs of the most refined character the capture and breaking in of wild horses of the steppes. This was also the time when Xenophantes of Athens was making those vases adorned with coloured and gilt figures cast from moulds with which we shall presently meet. They also show us hunters and the contests of the legendary Arimaspians with the Griffins.

The contents of the Artyukhov tumulus include many funeral wreaths of gold leaves, necklaces of gold and stones, complex ear-rings and beads of coloured glass. The rich barrows in the Great Bliznitsa contained the burials of several generations

and manifest the mutations of taste and the decline of art. Some of the graves, however, date from the times of Alexander and have yielded beautiful examples of ornaments for trimming dresses shaped into the heads of Medusa and Athene and others in the form of flowers. A lovely gold necklet contains delicately modelled goats and sheep, but it is only one among many treasures and there are also diadems galore. The latest Kul-Oba burials are of about the first century B.C., but the most interesting objects of that date are a pair of two-handled glass cups (of the usual Imperial Roman shape) which are at Moscow and were found at Siverskaya. Their handles are covered and the rim is surrounded with wrought gold and set with cabochons, while a number of gold chains ending in little globes hang from the rim almost down to the foot, which likewise is encased in gold. These cups are historically important as showing in an early form the kind of decoration which in after years became traditional at Byzantium for the setting and adornment of chalices. A round-bottomed gold cup from Novocherkassk with a handle rudely modelled in the form of a horse and with jewels inlaid in the gold is much coarser contemporary barbarian work. A pottery rhyton from the same place displays the figure of a sheep very naturally modelled. The same treasure included two gold crowns. One of them of rude workmanship but effective design is surmounted all round by standing stags and has on its brow a Hellenistic

female head cut out of chalcedony. The treasure evidently belonged to some nomad chief whose taste was satisfied by a flashy exuberance.

We shall presently meet with a great number of circular silver plates embossed or engraved with designs mostly of Sassanian and Byzantine origin. An early example of the type is a plate at the Hermitage adorned with the figure of a nymph on a hippocampus and parcel-gilt. It may have been made in Antioch in the second century A.D. A few rare Parthian productions of like date are also in the Hermitage. Such are some bowls adorned with horses of Greek traditional type and some ivories found at Olbia in which the heads of fuzzy hair are foreign to classical tradition.

Greek and Roman sculpture in marble of classical times is not a very strong feature of the Hermitage Collections. There are indeed a good many statues and busts, interesting and a few even important for students, but there are none of outstanding popular interest. A large bronze statuette known as the Stróganov Apollo did indeed make a claim to high repute till Fortwängler declared it to be a forgery, based upon the Apollo Belvedere. Further examination led to the conclusion that though the head, arms, and lower parts of the legs are a clever modern addition, the torso is probably antique. Among the marble statues the Tauride Venus is the most attractive; it is of the Medici type and was acquired by Peter the Great. Dr. Waldhauer

has recently called attention in the pages of the *Hellenic Journal* to several heads and other fragments of Greek workmanship of the best time which deserve attention in the Hermitage, notably a head of Æsculapius, for which with justice he claims an important place. I shall not, however, attempt here to discuss objects for the enjoyment of which special knowledge is an almost essential preliminary.

One of the most beautiful of the minor arts carried to perfection in Imperial Roman times was the cutting of cameos out of agates in layers of different colours. The art does not go back in point of date behind the third century B.C. One of its earliest examples is a Cupid with a butterfly, cut in a sardonyx of three layers, the background being blue, the body white, the hair brown. It was found in Artyukhov's barrow along with a third-century coin, which avails to fix an approximate date for it, and with the earliest known example of Greek cloisonné enamel. The Great Imperial cameos, prized treasures also of Mediaeval and Renaissance monarchs, are few and famous. The illustrious Farnese Tazza at Naples is first in rank. Beside it for ancient fame we place the Grand Camée de France, large as a dinner plate, which St. Louis obtained along with the "Crown of Thorns" from Baldwin of Constantinople, to whom it had descended in the Imperial Treasury direct from the Emperors of Rome. There is the Gemma Augustea at Vienna, and a few more might be named, but for quality none of them, unless it be the Farnese



Tazza, is superior to the Cameo in the Hermitage which the Empress Josephine presented to Alexander I—a royal gift indeed. It used to belong to the Gonzagas and is still known as the Gonzaga Cameo. Its earlier history is unknown. It is cut in an unusually thick stone—more than one inch in depth—and it contains four main layers of different colours. Out of these are fashioned the profile heads, one behind the other, of Ptolemy II and his wife. It is therefore not of Roman but of Egyptian Hellenistic work and exemplifies the best ever done in this kind and on this scale. The Egyptians at an early, indeed a prehistoric, date learned how to cut the hardest stones and they remained supreme in that category of sculpture throughout antiquity and down to the end of the Roman Empire. The art became dormant for a few hundred years, but was revived again in Cairo in the tenth century when crystal ornaments and cups were made there and exported as things of great value to West European countries. A very remarkable gem in the Hermitage is a thick crystal with a head of Lucius Verus hollowed out in high, almost round, relief. This intaglio is backed with gold foil. When it is regarded, as was intended, from the other side through the thickness of the stone, it looks like a delicate golden head embedded in crystal. It is mounted in an antique gold frame.

The Hermitage possesses an important collection of antique gems of all qualities and periods. They

are well known to students and have been adequately published. Such tiny and precious objects do not come under the observations of tourists and other sketchy visitors to Museums who have little idea of the rare beauty and astonishing skill manifested as completely on this diminutive scale as in great buildings like the Parthenon or monumental sculptures such as the Elgin Marbles. Time was lacking to me for careful examination of the Hermitage gems, but there were two known to me from reproductions which I could not pass unvisited. I refer to the Herons engraved about 430-420 B.C. by the Greek, Dexamenos of Chios, who signed his name on both. Finest is that in which the bird is depicted in flight, with long slender legs trailing out behind. Nothing can surpass the delicacy of the modelling and the marvel of the composition in surface and line. The eye delights in every detail of its finest form which does not fail under high enlargement. Two other signed gems by him are known—one of them at Cambridge—but if only this one tiny trifle survived it would suffice to elevate him to a high place in the temple of Fame. Twenty-five centuries ago he lived his life; married perhaps and had children, enjoyed and suffered the mutations of chance and did from day to day the work that came to his hand. All this is utterly forgotten; nothing whatever is known about him; but these four little fragments of his life's work have slipped down through the meshes of the centuries and can still

gratify and elevate the modern spectator with as high a delight as they gave to their first owner nearly a hundred generations ago. Little thought the artist when, perhaps with just pride, he engraved his name beside the bird, that he was thereby acquiring for it a longer survival than was to be granted to the name of any, save a very few, of his prominent contemporaries.

When the wealth of antique treasures yielded up by the tombs in South Russia is remembered, it is not surprising that the Hermitage should possess a very large assemblage of Greek and Hellenistic vases. To those thus acquired a great number have been added by purchase so that the collection adequately represents the ceramic art of the Greeks. To describe it would be to write in brief the history of vase-painting. I will therefore only mention a few examples of exceptional character which cannot be seen in other Museums. Such for instance are some large Ionian pots of the seventh century B.C. with decoration of markedly Oriental character the like of which are not elsewhere to be found. Another class of vase here numerous represented is one adorned with rather vulgar and profuse moulded, gilt, and painted decoration. Campania yields vases of this kind but of relatively late date. The Hermitage examples come from the Kerch neighbourhood and date back to the fifth century B.C. The applied figures were cast in moulds. Some of these vases are of large size, for example one of the



A SASSANIAN SILVER PLATE IN THE HERMITAGE.





early fourth century from Kerch depicting the contest of Athene and Poseidon. It displays a combination of painting in the red-figure style with decoration in reliefs, the reliefs being partly modelled and partly from moulds. They are now white where they were originally gilt. There is a jug of this sort signed by "Xenophantos the Athenian," who evidently thus distinguished himself from the local workmen at Kerch where presumably he was living. The applied decorations on this and on a smaller jug have been cast from the same moulds. Such rather gaudy vases were designed to please the taste of barbarian chieftains who were less attracted by the refined productions of the contemporary potters of Athens. Finally let me mention, because it particularly attracted my attention, a large circular black tray or dish of the second century B.C. bearing the vivid bust portrait of a lady, which in design and treatment anticipated the portrait heads painted on so many Egyptian coffins two or three hundred years later. This piece of pottery came from Apulia.

Antique glass is not every one's fancy, but it is the passion of some and I am of their number. It is not alone the beauty of the fabric and the forms that give delight, but there is also a subconscious wonder at the marvellous adventure which has brought such frail creations in safety down so many tumultuous centuries. The Hermitage possesses a very large and important collection of ancient glass, whereof a considerable part has come from the graves

of South Russia. The earliest glass to obtain popularity and thus still to exist in quantity was fashioned out of a matrix in many coloured layers, which while still plastic was moulded over a core into small bottles and phials. There are many alabastra and other types of these here, as in most other Museums, dating from the eighteenth Egyptian Dynasty down to Hellenistic days, but they do not call for special attention. It is not till fancy, set free by the increased dexterity of the glass worker, began to play with forms and colours in light-hearted fashion that the capabilities of glass began to appear. Here for instance is a blue glass vase covered all over outside with splashes of many colours as though fallen upon it with the freakishness of rain-drops. It is of Hellenistic date. So likewise are vessels which have been entirely cut out with the wheel or decoratively modelled out of a solid lump of glass after the manner of crystal carvers. All glass at this time was brilliantly coloured and thick.

It was not till the time of Augustus that colourless glass was made and blown quite thin, often into a figured or shaped mould. Syria and Alexandria were the centres of best manufacture in this kind, though workmen from those parts set up prolific factories in Campania and at Ostia. A lovely blue Campanian vase could not escape observation both for form and colour, but it is surpassed in delicacy of handiwork by a very thin red jug wrought with slender ribs which must have been made at Tyre

or Sidon during the first century A.D. A little later and a little richer in colour is another of similar form, perhaps from Alexandria. Murrhine, stratified, and other delightful types of glass are all here illustrated, but can scarcely be made interesting to a reader without the help of coloured plates. With developing skill forms grew more complex and little perfume bottles took the shape of busts, bunches of grapes, and so forth. By the fourth century the manufacture of glass was widely spread throughout the Roman Empire, and there were big factories on the Rhine and in North Gaul in the Amiens neighbourhood. A good Rhenish example in the Hermitage was blown into a square sectioned mould with a figure in relief on each face. A thick two-handled bottle of about the same date made in Syria is cruciform in horizontal section. Let these few examples suffice to indicate the variety and comprehensiveness of this large collection.

Passing now to early examples of the style of goldsmithy identified with the Goths and spread by them all over Europe during the Barbarian Invasions, the most notable group in the Hermitage came out of the Suuk-su cemetery in the Crimea and may be dated about A.D. 300. It includes bracelets, buckles, strike-a-lights, and ear-rings; the last mentioned carry a globe of gold with little radiating cylinders each terminating in a tiny garnet. Such ear-rings are found at a later date anywhere between Britain, North Africa, and Egypt. A silver helmet

from Moldavia is definitely barbarian work of the folk-wandering days. It carries cheek-pieces and is strengthened by a ridge, mounting from the brow and over-arching the head. Two engraved and inscribed silver plates from Kerch of the time of Constantius evidence a marked decay both in design and execution. In the middle of each is a head in a medallion, rudely drawn, and there are rings of sketchy decoration around and traces of gilding.

Objects of Early Christian art in the Hermitage come almost exclusively out of the famous Basilevski Collection which the Tsar purchased. The easily accessible illustrated Catalogue of that collection has made them widely known. Among them is a unique bronze church lamp in the form of a Basilica with rings for the lamp glasses. It emerged from North Africa by way of Algiers. The fifth-century glass bowl from Podgoritsa in Montenegro is almost unique. On it a number of religious subjects are rudely engraved. A small oblong silver reliquary found in the Crimea imitates the form of a late Roman sarcophagus. There are three medallions in relief on front and back and one at each end. They contain the heads of Christ, the Virgin, and six Saints. A cross is on the sloping roof.

The products of craftsmen working in the Persian Empire under the Sassanian Kings from the fifth to the seventh century A.D. obtained, as indeed they merited, a wide distribution by commerce. Many



SASSANIAN JUG FROM THE FORMER COLLECTION  
OF THE GRAND DUKE ALEXIS, NOW IN THE  
HERMITAGE.





of them have been found in North Russia and along the trade route of which the Volga was the stem. The splendidly decorative silks woven on Persian looms at this time are known to us from fragments mostly found in the dry soil of Egypt, but the Hermitage can show by far the largest collection of Sassanian silver plates. Where the Museums of London, Paris, and Berlin prize a very few of them among their rarest treasures, the Hermitage owns about three score. The earliest may be one of the fourth or fifth century that came out of the Treasure of Poltava. On them we can see in outline and gilt relief representations of the Sapers and the Chosroës on horseback in the pride of war or of the chase, and often too of Bahram Gur, the legendary hero of Oriental huntsmen. A sixth-century piece shows us a mythological personage riding a griffin. The Hermitage also possesses imitations of such plates, made and found in Siberia, and a few produced in the early days of Islam before that religion had obtained complete mastery over Oriental design.

Sassanian jugs and bottles exist in some number in the Hermitage. A few are thought to be of Afghan origin. Poltava gives us a heavy and quite plain gold jug, whose single merit is the material of which it was made, also three similarly heavy lobed vases of gold equally plain. The Khanenko Collection at Kiev owns a fourth. Two bottles awaken interest by the display of Indian influence. They are decorated in repoussé with figures of dancers framed

in arcading. Dancers of this type are found on some Siberian things and on a tiny engraved gem in the Hermitage as well as on a lobed vase here attributed to the fifth century A.D. A jug finely engraved with camel-headed winged beasts, though probably made in the eighth century, retains the pure Sassanian tradition, while transition to the Islamite style is exemplified by three boldly designed bronze jugs from Daghestan, one of which bears a cock delightfully modelled in the round. Two other jugs have for handles the figure of a man who drinks and there is a third like them in the British Museum. It is worthy of note that the same figure appears painted upon the wall of one of the Ajanta caves in India. The Indian artist was the borrower.

A heavy iron tray about a yard square, which was found in Samarkand and is in the Hermitage, has been recognized as a Sassanian altar. Nowhere else is the like to be seen. Eight stumpy curly-winged lions stand in a row along each of the four sides. The space they frame is somewhat depressed and is obviously suited to contain a fire. It may well be a Zoroastrian fire-altar. Though for the present called Sassanian it may perhaps be of earlier date. Unique also is a strange-looking heavy statuette of a personage who is thought to be a Sassanian prince or Bahram Gur himself. His elephant resembles in type the representations of elephants which have been found at Turfan. I was not told the provenance of this singular object,

which raises more questions than are easily to be answered. Even the date is quite obscure. It may be as late as the ninth or tenth century. The only other group of Sassanian treasures to which I can allude is that of the engraved gems. The Hermitage possesses two or three trays full of them, in number some seven or eight hundred. They are watched over by an expert lady whose great knowledge of the subject ought to find permanent record. Unfortunately, she, like most of the officials of the Hermitage, is entirely devoid of that kind of ambition which pushes the students of most countries to seek publicity. The engraving on these little stones is seldom of high quality. They depict heads, beasts, figures, and so forth. Some have *Pehlevi* inscriptions. Stones thus inscribed need not be of Sassanian date.

## XI

### BYZANTINE, MEDIAEVAL AND ASIATIC ART

#### I. BYZANTINE

Russia alone possesses any considerable variety of works of art of the Byzantine schools, and it is only in Russia that a comprehensive Museum of Byzantine art could be formed. Venice indeed can show in the Treasury of St. Mark an unrivalled series of Byzantine chalices, bookbindings, and other treasures of goldsmithy lacking in Russia, but it is in Kiev, Moscow and Petersburg that you find a broadly representative series of all the categories of Byzantine artistic production. At present these things are scattered, not only in the three cities I have named, but in different Museums and churches in those cities. It is hoped that in the general rearrangement of art treasures in Russia now being taken in hand, the formation of a Byzantine Museum may be undertaken. The most fitting though not the most accessible locality for such a Museum would doubtless be Kiev. A rapid survey of the available material that passed before my eyes may be of some interest even to the general reader.

At the time when Sassanian silversmiths were



making the plates referred to in the last chapter, Byzantine craftsmen were similarly engaged. Perhaps the earliest example I saw is one in the Hermitage that was found together with a Sassanian plate of the fifth century; it may even be of earlier date than that. The subject depicted upon it is of Hellenistic type—a man, pensively seated beside his dog and browsing goats. It might be an illustration to some poem by Theocritus. Another and considerably later plate, attributed to the sixth or seventh century, is equally classical. It contains four figures and two horses in a row derived from the story of Atalanta and Meleager. An Orphic subject occupies the inner surface of a plate at Moscow of about the same date. Here a graceful young woman is in the act of sacrificing at an altar with a serpent coiling about. Though mythological themes were often treated by Byzantine artists even in late mediaeval times, it is very rare indeed to find pagan ritual thus commemorated two or three centuries after Constantine. Another silver plate at the Hermitage is surrounded by a rim of beasts, Sassanian in design but Greek in workmanship. Athene (blessing in the Greek manner!) figures on a seventh-century plate which bears resemblance to some of the Cyprus treasure (*c.* A.D. 550–600), in the J. P. Morgan Collection. Ajax and Achilles are beside her, the latter of a typically Early Christian type. Pieces of his armour lie at her feet. One of the most spirited of these designs exhibits a dancing Nymph and Silenus joyously

waving a wine-skin. They are depicted in very low relief against a gilt background—seventh-century work. It is rare to find a plate of this kind adorned with a definitely Christian subject, but one from the Stróganov collection was found in Siberia and has often been reproduced. There is a large Cross in the centre and an angel standing on either side of it with the Four Rivers flowing from its foot. The design is excellent and the work good, but it was probably made in Syria sometime in the sixth century. The Hermitage also shows two large silver plates with central Crosses but otherwise plain. Classical subjects depicted in relief decorate a bottle and a bucket found in Moldavia, but apparently of sixth-century Byzantine origin. They are vulgar-looking things and may well have been made for sale to Barbarians.

The Treasure of Poltava or of Perestchopino, the village or farm where it was found, contains a multitude of vessels which we may roughly attribute to Byzantine craftsmen working in the sixth century. First for mention must be a great gold jug with dolphin handles and a running scroll of foliation round the belly. Leaves rise from the foot and the top is finished with a narrow decorative border. Next come two silver plates, one with a central Cross and grooves radiating from it, the other and larger with the Christian monogram which we can definitely place in the days of Anastasius (A.D. 518). Of equal age is a flat handled cup with a horizontal rim on



SASSANIAN DISH IN THE HERMITAGE, FROM THE POLTAVA TREASURE.



which beasts and trees are embossed. Poseidon is similarly introduced on the handle and a child on a child's back in the medallion. There are also gold cups with a ball to rattle inside a small attached globe, and there are other cups and objects too numerous to mention. Pendant pectoral crosses, usually hollow to contain a relic, have come down to us in great numbers from early centuries, especially in the ninth. They were made in the West as well as the East, and most are rather roughly fashioned in bronze. Moscow's Museum possesses a case full, one of gold delicately inlaid with cloisonné enamel and outlined with pearls (tenth century), and others dating anywhere between the eighth and twelfth centuries.

Byzantine pottery is of extremest rarity. The Hermitage can show some pieces with a chequer pattern in green and yellow of the time of Constantine the Great, and similar fragments are in the British Museum. In the Hermitage also are a good many fragments which come down from the tenth century. They are fashioned out of Chersonese clay, decorated with engraved birds, and glazed in greenish or yellowish tones. Similar fragments may be seen in the Moscow Museum, the birds being very freely drawn on a light background, green, yellow, and black being the colours employed. Some authorities would carry this kind of pottery back to the sixth century. Whenever the day comes for excavation in Constantinople light will be shed on all such questions.



Personal ornaments worn by the Greek gentry or made for sale to Russian nobles have occasionally been revealed by the spade, the chief finds having been made in the neighbourhood of Kiev. The Hermitage received most of them. Some of the earliest (attributed to the seventh or eighth centuries) came out of Mersina, but the most notable find was made within the boundaries of St. Michael's Monastery at Kiev when the tomb of a tenth-century Polyan Prince was opened. It yielded silver bracelets very perfectly engraved with beasts, a necklace of enamelled roundels, another of pendant crosses, ear-rings of the Polyan type and another very large one too elaborate for description. There were many ingots of silver of a shape elsewhere known, doubtless serving as money; and there were several fragments of stuff not entirely perished. The Hermitage can show many Byzantine ear-rings of this period, beside those in the St. Michael's find, and they are to be seen in Museums in other lands. Most are of a single type; they consist of a wide and hollow crescent of gold, which one might roughly describe as boat-shaped, hanging from a gold wire bent to go over the top of the ear. The face of the crescent is inlaid with designs in enamel. I have seen such ear-rings set with jewels and pearls, but those in gold and enamel are commoner. The Hermitage also displays a silver bowl and spoons attributed to the tenth century, but its most remarkable Byzantine possession of this period is the half-length figure of a

Saint in mosaic of tiniest cubes fixed in a wax bed. The picture is sunk into a frame set with a few jewels and is of very fine quality and exceptional rarity. It was purchased in Constantinople.

If the suggested Byzantine Museum were established in one of the old Monasteries at Kiev, the eleventh century could be illustrated by the architecture, decorative sculpture, and mosaic decorations of the old churches there. The Moscow Museum shows casts and copies of some of these things and some actual carvings and capitals the like of which lovers of art will remember to have seen on the West façade of St. Mark's at Venice. One of the Museum galleries exhibits casts of the ancient sculptured ornament at Vladimir on the twelfth-century Cathedral of St. Demetrius, but these are Romanesque rather than Byzantine. At the Hermitage we can see the splendid contents of a find made at Kiev. The most valuable object is a golden collar of circular enamelled medallions. The three in the centre depict a *deësis*, those further out Saints and angels. A diadem has also nine such medallions set upon it with small full-length figures. There is another diadem of gold filigree and a heavy torc of plaited gold wire. These are all attributed to the eleventh or twelfth century and are considered to be the work of Greeks resident in Kiev. Two other important finds were made in the same neighbourhood in the years 1887 and 1889. The former included twenty gold and enamelled roundlets for a necklace, and a like number were

found in the other. The latter depicted birds and flowers alternately and they were accompanied by a pair of large ear-rings and three big medallions, part of yet another necklace. A considerable margin of error must be allowed for the dating of all these objects and some may descend into the thirteenth century. To the fourteenth we can attribute a large fragment of an enamel picture, well reproduced in the Basilevski Catalogue. It is rather rude in design but splendidly decorative in effect.

The Museum would be completed with a collection of Byzantine icons, by which I do not mean pictures painted by Russian artists in Byzantine style but the authentic works of Greek painters. It is as yet too early to say how many such pictures will come to light under the skilful hands of the cleaners in the Kremlin studios. We shall have to await with patience what they will reveal, but we may expect with some confidence that there will be, as it were, brought to life again, paintings made not only in Constantinople itself but also in Syria and other parts of the Eastern Empire as far back as in the fifth century, and from that time down to the twelfth in a fairly continuous series. When the work of cleaning, of concentration, and of arrangement has been accomplished, the Byzantine Museum of Russia will become a place of pilgrimage which every serious student of art-history will be obliged to visit before his education can be considered complete.

## 2. MEDIAEVAL ANTIQUITIES

The collection of mediaeval *objets d'art* in Petersburg is now shown in a series of rooms in that part of the Hermitage facing the Neva which Catherine II built on to the Winter Palace. These rooms used to be placed at the disposal of royal visitors to the Tsars. M. Poincaré, when President of the French Republic, was the last to occupy them in 1914 on the eve of the War.

The most precious of the mediaeval antiquities, other than Byzantine, which the Hermitage can show came to it, as aforesaid, in the Basilevski collection. Earliest in date is a Merovingian chalice of copper gilt inlaid with silver ornaments and with a misspelt inscription intended to read "Grimfridus presbyter fieri rogavit." The said Grimfrith is otherwise unknown to fame. The chalice came from St. Martin des Champs at Paris and was wrongly called St. Chaeodegard's. Such early North European chalices are of exceptional rarity. The best known are one in the Venice Treasury which may be Ostrogothic, the little Gourdon chalice at Paris, and the Tassilokelch, which is now attributed to an Anglo-Saxon craftsman. But it is to the antiquities of mediaeval Russia that a visitor will be wise to pay most attention both because they are the chief raw material out of which the history of that country during several centuries will have to be constructed and because it is only in Russia that a continuous series

can be studied. Thus the Altai region contributes a curious set of horses, made in wood and gold, and other remains assignable to about the eighth century. From Turkestan come various bronze cauldrons as well as inscribed Nestorian objects. Relics of a rare and as yet little studied Moslem folk who inhabited the Kazan district near the Volga excited without in any way satisfying my interest. They lived in the ninth and later centuries. The supremacy of the conquering Scandinavians in the North during the ninth and following centuries explains the presence in both the chief Russian Museums of a number of their tortoise and box-shaped bronze fibulæ, which are found wherever those adventurous warriors penetrated.

Moscow displays the earliest definitely Slav productions, relics of the Krivichi tribe, a town-dwelling and trading folk who, settled on the Upper Volga, emerge into view in the tenth century. Among their ornaments is a characteristic type of ear-ring, based on the Byzantine with the addition of five radiating members below the crescent. A Persian lamp in the form of a female head found among their grave-goods exemplifies their trading activities. A similar culture is exposed by finds on the Upper Dvina. A group of antiquities, perhaps a century later in date, found near Kiev is exhibited in the same Museum. They include a variety of ear-rings, some being Slav imitations in bronze of Byzantine originals; a great many more are of the Polyan type, whereof there are



examples in gold and delicate filigree. There are yet other kinds which point to a crossing of influences in that active centre. A silver bottle and tray, which attracted attention when they were shown in the great exhibition of Moslem Art at Munich, belong to this date and are among the rarities of the Hermitage. With them we may name a remarkable bronze pot inlaid in bands with figures and inscriptions and with handles looped by beasts. It was made at Herat in 1163. Such Moslem treasures can be seen elsewhere, but only the Moscow Museum can illustrate the period surrounding the twelfth century with a mixed group of antiquities from Novgorod (some Christian, some pagan), another of quite different character from the Dnieper, the contents of the Prince's Hill and another barrow near Kiev (which displays curious Hallstatt survivals in company with Polyan ear-rings), and finally an axe with designs on its two faces inlaid in gold, one side manifesting Sassanian the other Scandinavian traditions. Two great processional crosses decorated in open metal-work with birds and other ornaments come from Vladimir. Along with the foregoing objects they illustrate the variety of civilizations that were struggling forward simultaneously in mediaeval Russia. The contents of a thirteenth-century Finnish woman's grave with its barbarous and tinkling bronze ornaments would not look out of place in a Bronze Age collection.

Eighteen great bronze cauldrons in the Hermitage

keenly excited my cupidity. They are as massively picturesque as the Sassanian altar. Etchmiadzin in Armenia possesses one like them inscribed in Armenian with a date equivalent to A.D. 1232. They are roughly spherical in form with the lip bent over horizontally and extended into ring-carrying handles. The rings are held by beasts and the flat rim is decorated with beasts and foliage. The vessels stand on three feet. The beasts clearly authenticate a survival of Sassanian traditions.

A holy-water stoop in ivory belonged to that Emperor Otto II whom we have already named as husband of the Byzantine princess Thophanu. It is, of course, a rare treasure. An eleventh-century Byzantine ivory plaque of the Visitation, set in a twelfth-century jewelled frame of filigree and enamels in alternate panels, decorates a very rich book-cover, but the panels have at some time been disarranged. They have not, however, been so irresponsibly dealt with as were the half-length enamels of Apostles by Gottfried de Claire which, belonging perhaps originally to a portative altar, have been built up by clever fraud into a casket. An atmosphere of suspicion also surrounds a jewelled triptych with a Crucifixion and Saints. Careful examination revealed under the plaques fragments of newspaper of 1843. It seems possible that the triptych in its present condition is a reassemblage of twelfth and thirteenth century pieces on the original lines. The finest mediaeval treasure in the Hermitage is a most

peculiar and attractive reliquary of the twelfth century. Its chief member is a statuette of a vested deacon, fashioned in silver-gilt plates over a core of wood. The embroidered covers are represented by jewelled bands, and many of the stones are precious as well as brilliant in effect. Among them is a Byzantine gem of jasper cut into the form of a seated Christ. The deacon's head is made in six pieces and there is no wood within it. When the reliquary box is opened it shows a hollow shaped to hold a thumb, but the thumb is gone and the Saint to whom it belonged is forgotten. The temptation to attribute this reliquary to some German workshop is negatived by the amice which the deacon wears, for that vestment did not reach Germany till a century after this object was made. Two circular flabella of well-designed open work are European examples of a ritual instrument that continues in use to the present time in Eastern Churches. A fine archaic ivory Virgin of about the year 1200 is only paralleled by two in Paris—in the Cluny and Dutuit collections.

Limoges enamels seem to have had a special attraction for Russian collectors. There is a whole case of them in the Shuválov Palace, and many more in the Stieglitz and Imperial collections. A very good early example in the Hermitage is a casket on which the Legend of St. Valérie of Limoges is depicted *à fond vermiculé*. Several more caskets, a covered chalice-reliquary, two metal horns, one of them

standing on a dragon, some crosier-heads, and a quantity of the usual output of the Limoges workshops exemplify the best and the second best of their manufacture during three centuries. As examples of thirteenth-century work I may cite a flat reliquary triptych of the type affected by late Crusaders, who had the relics they easily acquired from Oriental dealers set together in labelled compartments in a tablet. Several reliquaries of the kind are known. They imply a time when relics had become material for collectors, prince amongst whom was St. Louis. There is also an inscribed French reliquary of St. Elizabeth (*ob.* 1231), but the figure does not look French. A similar reliquary is or was at Rheims. Two important treasures from St. Trutbertus Abbey near Freiburg in the Breisgau found their way into the omnivorous Basilevski collection. One is a splendid processional cross in gold with silver-gilt figures of the Virgin and St. John and with Evangelist emblems at the ends. The back is finely embossed. The groundwork in front, instead of being, as usual, in filigree, is enriched with golden foliage soldered on. All the forms are pure and the whole produces a great effect. It dates from the end of the thirteenth century. From the same abbey also came a chalice, paten, and two tubes for sucking up the wine. This is a very rare example of a complete Eucharistic set of the aforesaid date. Medallions in relief and niello decorations embellish the chalice.

The more elaborate and incipiently decadent

Gothic of the fourteenth century is exemplified by two monstresances which formed part of the treasure of Basle Cathedral so foolishly sold by the Cantonal authorities not very many decades ago. A beautifully proportioned reliquary on lion-feet and four French ivory statuettes of the Madonna belong to the same age. They are grouped near two marble statuettes of men picturesquely mourning which belong to the series initiated by the great Claas Sluter to fill niches in the tombs of the Dukes of Burgundy in the Chartreuse near Dijon. They were scattered in the French Revolution and turn up here and there in many Museums.

A few choice examples of Islamic decorative art of the fourteenth century cannot be passed without mention. The most precious is the only perfect existing specimen of the so-called Alhambra vases; it came out of the collection and retains the name of Fortuny. A shaped and inscribed piece of flat gold plate bearing the name of Khan Uzbek and intended to serve as passport for one of his servants exhibits the last degradation of the form of a prehistoric bronze axe. Pots of Turkestan made to contain quicksilver preserve the memory of an ancient trade. Tartar antiquities from the Kazan district, displayed with the preceding at Moscow, might easily be assigned to a much greater antiquity were it not demonstrable that they also date from about the fourteenth century.

Several enamelled glass mosque-lamps and bottles, finest products of Syrian or Egyptian factories, recall



the unrivalled glories of the Cairo Museum in this kind. Here also is a collection of early Venetian glasses including two beautiful and perfect specimens of *porcellana contrafacta* of about 1500, and a two-handled vase imitating an antique form. A big monstrance, ending aloft in a forest of finials and other late Gothic elaborations, was made in 1474 by the goldsmith Ryssenbourg of Reval. Italian church treasuries are full of such things.

Three perfect and charming pieces of the now priceless St. Porchère ware cannot but make the fingers of the most virtuous collector tingle. They stand out among a multitude of Renaissance Limoges enamels, Italian majolica, and Hispano-Moresque wares, about which whole chapters might be written. They in turn lead on to a vast assemblage of porcelains of many countries, among which my stream of interest lost itself like a Central Asian river in the deserts of Turkestan.

### 3. ASIATIC TREASURES

Here perhaps I may most conveniently mention a number of Asiatic treasures of relatively modern date. The intimate connexion of Russia with Oriental peoples led to an accumulation of such treasures in the possession of the Tsars. These included gifts from Turkish Sultans and Persian Shahs, some of which have already been mentioned, and much Oriental armour as well as gifts and spoil from Kokand, Kashgar and Khiva. The largest

assembly of these is in the Hermitage. At the time of my visit all this material had been removed from its cases and was about to be rearranged. By the kindness of M. Troinitski, the Director of the Hermitage, a great quantity of the best things were brought out and arranged for my inspection upon tables in a room which I was invited to visit one evening. A blaze of jewels saluted my eyes on entering and would have produced a more overwhelming effect if I had not become accustomed by the experiences of recent days to the sight of such masses of treasure. Among the multitude of precious objects I held in my hands or could examine at leisure I noted at the time a very few which specially attracted attention and linger in the memory.

I first examined a number of state swords. The scabbard of one is sewn with emeralds; another of gold is richly embossed and enamelled. There was a Khiva dagger, hilted and sheathed in gold and gems. Anklets were there set with rubies and several heavy cups and bottles of gold plastered with rubies and emeralds—gifts from Shahs. A miniature table of solid gold, the weight of which I was invited to test, is framed around with enamels within which flowers made of rubies with centres of pearls emerged from a groundwork of emeralds. A mirror set in jade, a sixteenth-century crystal pilgrim-bottle dotted over with gems, a large *tache*, with pearls trembling on the feather of a stork, a Khiva hat of strange form and elaborate openwork decoration, many belts and a

lot of horse trappings were all costly in material, but often pretentious and even vulgar in design. The contents of the Khiva Treasury hither brought are multitudinous and of like character; they include a lot of chains, diadems, aigrettes and the like toys, but some of the filigree is very delicate and of great technical fineness. Large and ugly gold stirrups attracted by their size and material an attention not rewarded by their workmanship. Finally, I must mention an oblong gold talisman-box from far Tibet which would have repaid study. There is a crystal on each of its two long sides and good filigree decoration, but the other stones once set upon it have fallen out. It appears to be of considerable age, but nothing is known about it.

## XII

### THE SILVER GALLERY IN THE HERMITAGE<sup>1</sup>

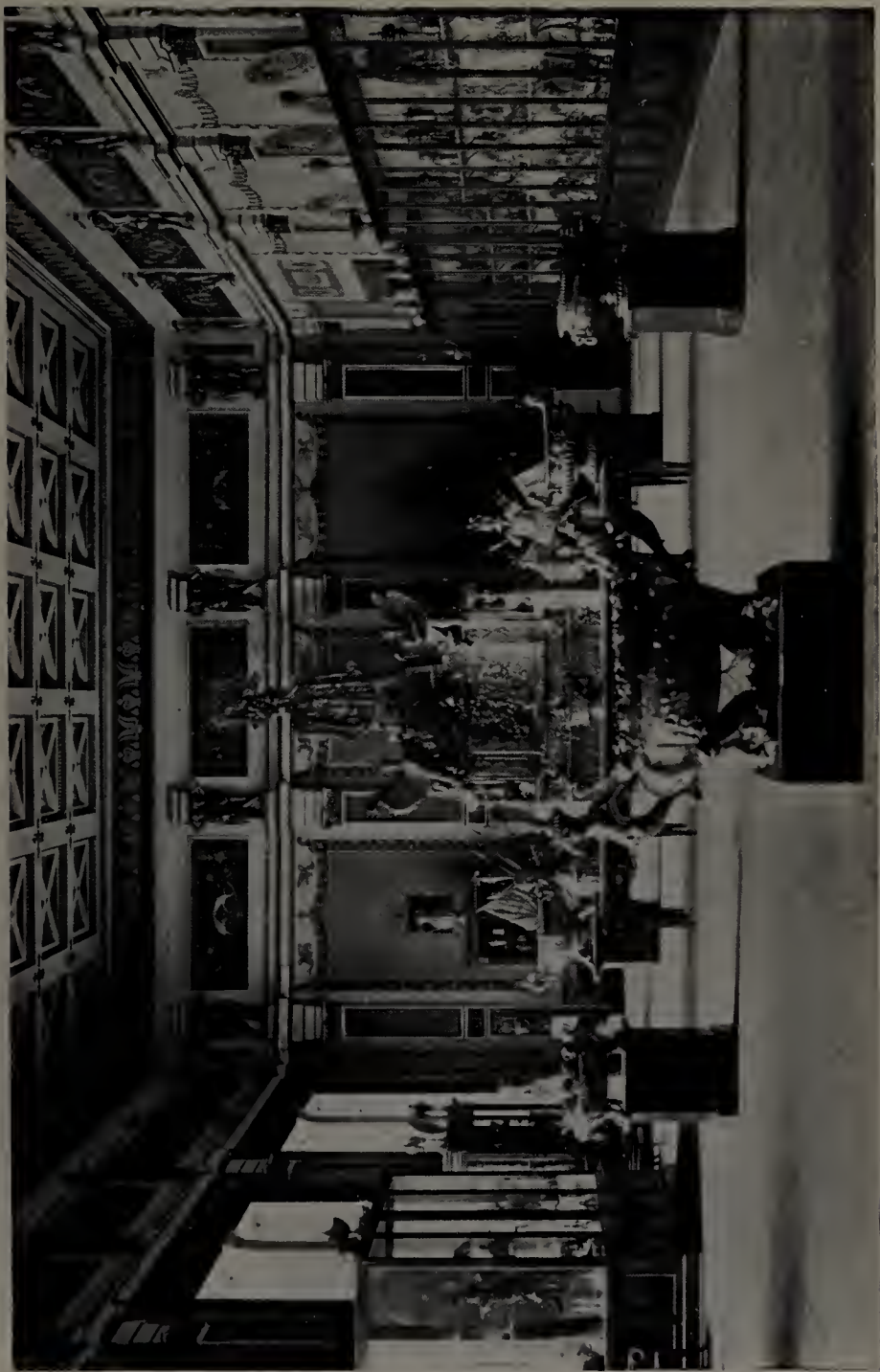
A wide and lofty gallery, in form resembling a hall in an ancient Roman bath with an apse at the end, is devoted to the display of a selection of the vast quantity of plate, mostly of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, which was gathered by the House of Romanov. Some additions have recently been made to it. Plate of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries is mainly collected together in the Kremlin. The most important piece of silver-work in point of size is the huge monument and sarcophagus erected in and about 1752 by the Empress Elizabeth to contain and glorify the bones of St. Alexander Nevski. Before the revolution it occupied the place of honour in the Cathedral of the Trinity within the Lavra or Metropolitan Monastery named after the Saint. It has been moved into the Hermitage for safer keeping. Only the silver columned canopy that covered it and the reading-desk and candlestick that stood before it are lacking, but they are upstairs and will be added to the rest. Every one will remem-

<sup>1</sup> See A. de Foelkersam's Inventory with photographs published in 1907.

ber the kind of lofty marble erection, covered with statuary and inscriptions, which expensive aristocrats in the eighteenth century liked to raise, as for instance in Westminster Abbey, in honour of a family or national hero. This silver mountain is such a monstrosity of about 1750. It is piled against the wall and carries life-sized figures holding inscribed tablets and other heavy accessories. Separate at the foot and in front of this stands the great sarcophagus, richly embossed all round with bas-reliefs depicting events in the life of the famous thirteenth-century Grand-Prince of Vladimir who won his surname by defeating the Swedes on the Neva (1240) and who obtained another signal and important victory over the Teutonic Knights on the ice of Lake Peipus two years later. Both events are commemorated in the bas-reliefs. Separate trophies of arms, standing at the head and at the foot of the sarcophagus respectively, complete this overpowering expression of the pride, the wealth, and the extravagance of an Imperial donor.

The glass-fronted cases that line the walls and the tables and pedestals arranged upon the floor contain objects of much greater artistic quality, the most numerous and not the least in merit being of English manufacture; for Russian royalties fetched their treasures from far and wide and preserved them with care, so that the collection contains precious examples of the work of goldsmiths not of England only but of France, Germany, Denmark, Sweden, Austria,





THE SILVER ROOM IN THE HERMITAGE.



Italy, and Holland. Large wine-cisterns of English make, the smallest larger than the largest foot-bath, stand about the room and arrest the eye. Of such stately pieces twenty-one are known to exist; four of them are here, including the biggest known, which was made in 1734-5 by Charles Kandler. The cistern was disposed of in a lottery, specially authorized by Act of Parliament, to raise funds for the building of Westminster Bridge. How it came to Russia is unknown. Smaller but more beautiful is the example which belonged to Lord Scarsdale and was made by the famous Paul de Lamerie in 1726-7. There is a lovely kettle also by him, and there are other works well known to experts. To tell of the Monteith punch-bowls, soup-tureens, ewers and dishes, wine fountains, cups tall and short and tankards, tea and coffee services, great centre-pieces, boxes, vases, candelabra, a whole dinner-service made for Catherine I and more beside, all English, would weary the reader; but I must not omit to mention the silver-gilt throne and foot-stool, made in 1713-4 by Nicholas Clausen in London for Peter the Great. It has heavy cabriole legs, ball and claw feet, a velvet back with later embroidery, the whole surmounted by a crown of fanciful British invention, for the Imperial Crown was not designed and adopted till the coronation of Catherine I in 1725. It stood in the throne-room of the Winter Palace, and was the Tsar's official throne down to the end.

A many-legged mahogany table with skilfully

chased ormolu ornament stands across the room. Catherine II had it made for Chapters of the Order of St. George. Now it is thrown into the shade by the five splendid pieces of plate which stand upon it. They are of finest French workmanship, three of them (a centre and two end-pieces for decoration of a banquet) displaying children, whom Boucher might have designed, playing upon rocks and fountains. They are about half life-size and were beautifully modelled and executed by François Thomas Germain in 1766-7. They form part of the "Service de Soltykov." This is but one of the many priceless examples of the best work of the most talented goldsmiths of France in the eighteenth century which are here, and almost here only, preserved; for the French in and after their Revolution melted down their plate and coined it into money, so that they must now come to Petersburg to learn what they have lost.

The Tsars with their many palaces had use for many dinner-services of gold, silver, and porcelain. Two, represented in this room by a few tureens, are of supreme merit. They are called the "Service de Paris" and the Orlov Service. The latter consists of more than 800 pieces and weighs 6,000 pounds. The former is almost as large. The Orlov Service was made in Paris in 1769-70 to the order of Catherine II as a gift for her favourite Count Orlov. After his death it was acquired by the Crown. The tureens are surmounted or surrounded by cherubs, fauns,

sea-monsters, lions, and other creatures exquisitely modelled in the round in perfect proportion and subordination to the fanciful and various shapes to which they are applied. I have never elsewhere seen large works in the precious metals that so commanded my admiration for grace of line, fancy of structure, and delicacy of modelling as these representative pieces from the two great services. Even rarer than Louis XV plate is that made in France in the time of Louis XIV. Russia possesses more of it than any other country. It is well represented in the Silver Gallery in the Kremlin, whilst a whole wall-case is filled with it here in the Hermitage. Therein are selected examples from the Service of the Empress Elizabeth, dated 1757; but the two large centre-pieces made by Claude Bellin in 1727-8 are perhaps the most noteworthy among the many objects displayed. They carry candles, jugs, pepper-pots, and other table equipment. A piece to serve the same purpose belongs to the Duke of Courland's "Service de Riga," but that was made at Augsburg in the early years of the eighteenth century.

The prolific silversmiths of Germany fill a large wall-case with their work. Much of it is fine, but good German plate can everywhere be seen. As I have pity upon the reader I will only mention as of special merit a Nuremberg cup boldly wrought into the form of a double-headed heraldic eagle for some Austrian Emperor. The mediaeval bird which the great Suger gave to St. Denis may have remotely



inspired this creation. As for other countries, a word or two must suffice. Copenhagen sends a wine-fountain on four legs (of 1703) with a roundly modelled figure of Neptune seated on a sea-monster who yields the wine. Italy is represented by a whole service of the end of the eighteenth century, called the "Service de Turin." A case full of seventeenth and eighteenth century Russian plate shows how local craftsmen affected somewhat heavier and simpler forms than those of the west, but excelled in good workmanship and especially in niello. Some of the best niellos were wrought in far Siberia. Cups of an almost spherical form, derived in the first instance from Oriental models, gradually develop a foot and a hollowed lip with a Russian inscription round it. They are a characteristic Russian type, but their Oriental derivation is never obliterated. There are also many flat cups or ladles with horizontal handles and often with double-eagles moulded in the bottom. In the main the work of Russian silversmiths appears to have possessed the merits of bold form and well-applied decoration. They are less good when they are imitating their German contemporaries and still less when following the French. The Baltic provinces yield their quota and fill a case to themselves. I have only cited a very few of the objects exhibited, and they are but a fraction of the Imperial collection.

A table-case in the Silver Gallery contains many delicately painted fans, one of them authentically

by the hand of Boucher. The names of the fair Imperial and Grand-ducal ladies who owned them are in most cases recorded. One wonders why a favourite subject for these feminine trifles should be "Achilles among the daughters of Lycomedes."

Another, and I think a larger, collection of fans was shown to me in a neighbouring room, but they could not retain my interest when the cabinet was opened containing the famous collection of watches. Many of the most precious of these are of English make and were published and illustrated by Dr. Williamson some years ago in the pages of the *Connoisseur*. They number about 170. As they were displayed to me on trays the blazing effect of jewels, enamels, and delicately wrought gold surpassed anything in my experience. Some go back to the time of Peter the Great. The complete bauble includes both the watch and an elaborate three-tailed *châtelaine* from which it hangs; the other tails were intended to carry a key and a seal or charm, but this last is generally missing. The *châtelaine* usually offers a relatively large area for decoration and is set with the biggest jewels. I remember in particular one that carried sapphires, wonderful both for size and depth of colour. The emeralds that stud another are also splendid.

Three of the most elaborately decorated examples belonged to the Empress Elizabeth. They sparkle with rubies, emeralds, and other "glorious trifles of the East." Her monogram also identifies an egg

set with many diamonds in foliated designs. It contains a watch, tweezers, and tiny boxes with enamelled cartouches—all of minutest workmanship. It was Catherine II who brought together all the fine watches in Crown possession in her day and added many a costly specimen to the rest. Several watches were gifts from Turkish Sultans of the seventeenth century, for whom they were made by Western artificers. They are distinguished by numerals in Arabic letters. Trick watches are also forthcoming, which play little games and offer small surprises. Some concern themselves with serious matters. Thus one watch is enclosed in a crystal cross illuminated with bright enamels. It was made for a French Abbess. All shapes are represented as well as every fancy decoration. A square example is eminent for its delicate applied tracery and fine modelling; it dates from the early years of the seventeenth century. It would be easy to devote pages to description of this unique collection, but without coloured illustration the reader would scarcely be enlightened. Those who would know more will find complete information in works of reference. For me the wonder was not in the history and development of a craft here so completely illuminated, but in the fire and splash of so many brilliant and precious objects gathered together and uniting to produce a single cumulative effect.

Upon the watches followed the snuff-boxes—trays after trays of them. As a collection they do not

possess the same unique quality, for snuff-box collections large and small have been made by many rich and curious amateurs. Peter the Great's pocket-comfort is a simple thing with a view of the fort of Petersburg in niello on the top and inside the lid a miniature portrait of his favourite child who died young. Several of the boxes were specially made for Catherine II, but I cannot find out whether she actually took snuff. At all events it is related that she took with her on all her journeys a snuff-box, with a likeness of Peter the Great upon it and that she used to refer to it in moments of indecision to obtain his advice. The story is told that one of her craftsmen, who was receiving from her an order to make a box which should possess some novelty, asserted that he would make a fine one out of the paving stones of the city. It appears that he knew where to find a piece of labradorite, and from this he fashioned the very pretty box which was placed in my hand.

Two boxes have a pathetic connection with the unfortunate Tsar Paul I. The first made in 1774 by Van Blarenburg of Paris has on its cover a most elaborate enamel depicting the arrival of Paul's first wife Natalie. The tiny figures assembled are countless and sustain examination under a strong glass. The next box handed to me was one of plain gold. I was bidden to observe a dent in its edge. This was caused by the blow that felled the Tsar, the murderer having held it in his fist. Stunned

in this fashion he was presently strangled. This happened in the year 1801. The prettiest box of the lot seemed to be one with a portrait of Louis XV wrought on mother-of-pearl. I was surprised to be told that it was of English workmanship, and I was bidden to observe that though the lid fits with great accuracy and the hinge works smoothly they do not possess the almost miraculous perfection of adjustment which characterizes the best French work of that day.

A number of jewelled personal ornaments are preserved in this same treasure-chamber. Among them are several of the kind called *Tache* in Turkish, most being gifts from Oriental potentates. They are intended as turban-decorations and resemble feathers sewn and trembling with brilliants. Here also I saw flower-bouquets made in coloured stones and enamels to be worn in the corsage of a lady. They date from about 1730-40. The reader must be reminded to regard what I have thus mentioned as only types and specimens of the countless precious objects I saw in this room; but I cannot conclude without recalling a magnificent gold cup made at Augsburg in the middle of the sixteenth century and adorned with the very finest enamels of mythological subjects in cartouches. The cup is of simple beaker form with cover and knob—a work of extreme rarity. There is another of like kind in the Green Vaults at Dresden.



### XIII

## THE STIEGLITZ AND THE ETHNOGRAPHICAL MUSEUMS

### 1. THE STIEGLITZ MUSEUM

It's a pity that when I was in Russia I did not avail myself of the opportunity to find out something about the founder and eponymous personage of the Stieglitz Museum and Art School. He must have been rich, generous, and wise. He not only founded and beautifully housed a great collection of works of decorative art—a kind of Victoria and Albert Museum on a smaller scale—but he built and endowed a school in connection with it for the training of decorative artists, and he equipped it with a capital endowment sufficient to purchase works of art, to supply scholarships for the maintenance of students, and to pay the expenses of travel and residence abroad for those who had given evidence of superior ability. Now, by the inflation of the rouble, the endowment has sunk to nil, but the school and the Museum remain and are kept functioning by the Government.

The Museum, which was built nearly thirty years ago, is not only a pleasing but also an efficient struc-

ture for the arrangement and exhibition of beautiful objects. It contains a brightly lit central hall, the full height of the building, surrounded by a row of galleries above and cloistered aisles below. This hall displays large trophies of enamelled tiles chiefly from Samarkand, glorious blue expanses moulded with great inscriptions, and intricate tile-mosaic or imitation mosaic patterns from the Mausoleum of Shah Zinde and other famous mosques of Turkestan and Persia. There also I saw again the tile-faced arcading which was offered for sale in London before the War. It came from the Royal Stables of Shah Abbas. The spandrels of the arches display various histories depicted on incised tiles in enamels of turquoise, yellow, and manganese on a rich blue ground within a floriated turquoise border. Spacious examples of such tile-work as can be easily imagined by those who have seen the mosques of Brussa are likewise displayed in striking multitude.

The surrounding galleries expose for study examples of the decorative arts of many periods: mediaeval enamels from the workshops of the Rhine and Limoges and ivories Byzantine, Russian, Spanish, and French, including some thirteenth-century draughtsmen. I noted a fourteenth-century silver plate with a Virgin, angel, and donor in delicately sunk relief once no doubt filled flat with coloured translucent enamels—one of the finest surviving examples of this rare kind of work. I think the donor was the French King Charles V, to judge from

his very big nose. I also observed with interest an alabaster figure of Christ in high relief. He is seated and holds an Orb and a Cross while a small angel looks over each of his shoulders. There are traces of the original colouring. The figure is about 3 feet high and is perhaps the finest specimen of English alabaster sculpture of the Nottingham School of about the year 1400 which any Museum can show. Its preservation is perfect. Some fifteenth-century Flemish wood carvings are remarkable because their design is taken from figures in Memling's altar-piece at Lübeck. Young furniture designers could find in these galleries examples of various periods and schools—French, Italian, and Flemish. A sideboard dated 1471, carved of some soft wood and but poorly preserved, specially interested me by its good proportions and pleasing design. Its chest on legs was fronted in three squares and overhung by a canopy. Its owner's arms were those of Savoy and a French royal bastard. Eighteenth-century furniture includes Catherine II's writing-table from Oranienbaum, a Venetian sedan-chair embroidered all over like an ecclesiastical vestment, and a room equipped with a great bronze, tapestry hangings, and contemporary furniture all characteristic of the best Louis XIV French production.

The Italian Renaissance is shown in decorative sculptures and figure reliefs dated 1508, meticulously carved and finished by Antonio Lombardi. They adorned the library of Alfonso of Ferrara, and Venturi

has written all that needs to be said about them. A group of Italian bronzes, much majolica (including a few early Tuscan pieces), a case of Limoges enamels, and other products of the period which can be studied everywhere are good in their kinds. Students of tapestries, embroideries, and fine textiles are well catered for. An embroidered antependium, dated 1477, is a treasure any Museum would be proud to possess. There are Burgundian tapestries of the fifteenth century—beautiful fabrics of which so few survive—and there are several sets or examples of the work of sixteenth-century Flemish weavers, including four illustrative of the Roman de Rose which once belonged to Sir Richard Wallace.

In Oriental carpets Russia is everywhere rich, especially in the kind called Polish. Here let it suffice if I name one glorious piece which has stags arranged around its centre, birds in the corners, a rich border including inscriptions in cartouches, and some silver thread inwoven. It dates from the end of the sixteenth century. A Paradise carpet a hundred years younger would be its worthy rival, but, alas! only half of it survives. The collection of stuffs, velvets, brocades—notable products of Persian and other famous manufactures of many dates—can only be named. The cases that contain them fill the eye with delight. Elaborately printed Indian cottons, which preserve a craft described by Pliny, have recently been studied and richly illustrated by Mr. G. P. Baker, who himself carries on the

tradition in actual manufacture. He would find two most elaborate cotton sheets thus glorified in the Stieglitz Gallery.

Of other Oriental products I need only mention the inlaid bronze vessels of Mosul, dating from and after the thirteenth century, and some rarely beautiful Persian Miniatures, especially those in a thirteenth-century manuscript of poems from the library of a Shah in which the same two people are shown again and again in a succession of fancifully decorated rooms well worthy of very careful study. In this connection I may perhaps go out of the way to mention a Persian album of miniatures of the finest quality which belongs to the Petersburg Academy of Sciences. They are among the best of their kind in the world. The Chinese Gallery contains examples of the arts of the Farthest East in Han, Tang, Sung, Ming, and later times.

It is, however, in Ceramics that this Museum conspicuously shines. It illustrates the potter's art with choice mediaeval examples from Rhages and other Persian sites, with lustre work early and late, with the beautiful blues of many eastern factories, and with a quantity of tiles, dishes, jugs, and other forms in the wares of Damascus, Asia Minor, and Rhodes. Here too is any quantity of German stoneware from Siegburg and other Rhineland factories (exhibited in the Riccard collection which came from Frankfurt to Petersburg), and here too is the eighteenth-century fayence of Strasburg, of Moustier,



Varages, and Marseilles, and a great assemblage of the output of Delft. Russia was the home of no less than 200 makers of porcelain, led by the prolific Gardner, an Englishman whose works appear in every palace and collection. Sèvres, Chelsea, Frankenthal, Copenhagen, Staffordshire, and every other centre of porcelain manufacture, is richly, almost too richly, represented in case after case and room after room full of an innumerable population of figurines and objects galore for table service and decoration. The visitor is overwhelmed by the multitude rather than impressed by the beauty of these countless objects, but for the student there is illustration of every type and paste.

The series of Russian stoves, chronologically ordered along a wall, is of special local interest. They begin in Peter the Great's time with free imitations of Delft tiles overspreading mountainous fire-boxes. Such stoves maintain a picturesque and definitely Russian type down to Catherine II and are all good of their kind. Then Western neo-classicism comes in and polychromy disappears. The stoves assume the forms of temples and other artificialities and for decoration they have poor imitations of antique reliefs. Such stuff is not good enough in its kind to attract attention nor did it provide opportunity for the play of the workman's own fancy. If the native art lingered on it was only in out-of-the-way districts and the houses of well-to-do farmers, whereof a few examples may be seen in the Ethnographical Museum.

## 2. THE ETHNOGRAPHICAL MUSEUM

The Alexander III Museum in Petersburg occupies a sumptuous building erected just a century ago as the Palace of the Grand-Duke Michael Pavlovitch, to which a wing was added shortly before the War. This wing contains the Ethnographical Museum; the remainder is devoted to a large picture-collection representative of Russian art. It, in fact, fulfils at Petersburg the same purpose as the Tretyakov Museum at Moscow, and hereafter I shall notice them together. A fine architectural impression is produced upon one entering by the spacious longitudinal hall and another raised hall, straight opposite to him, at right angles to the former. The walls and floor of the long hall are of variegated pink marble brightly polished. There is an apse at each end and the whole is covered with a lofty vault. It not only is but looks very big. The decorative detail is of the Doric order, simple and dignified. A large round-arched opening reveals the other hall which used to be fitted up as a memorial to Alexander III. It has a row of Ionic pilasters on either hand. At the time of my visit it was gorgeously lined with a temporary display of Oriental carpets.

The Ethnographical collection interested me more keenly than I had foreseen. It illustrates the simple country life of the peasantry in all parts of Russia and Siberia and does so in a very graphic manner. The main divisions are grouped in this order: Little

Russia, the Balkans, White Russia, Great Russia, Siberia and the North, and Turkestan. In each case we are shown the local costumes set up on well-sculptured typical figures, not modelled realistically in wax but in a yellowish composition handled by skilful artists under expert direction. We are often told about the benighted Russian peasant and how he grimly adheres to his wooden plough and the other rudimentary agricultural instruments of his ancestors. Well ! here they all were, and the effect they produced upon me was not contempt for their backwardness but admiration for their ingenuity. Take the Little Russians, for example, because I encountered them first. Here is a plough almost wholly constructed of wood, the coulter and the share at most being tipped with iron. Nothing can be imagined more ingenious. The way forked branches and other naturally shaped pieces of wood are adjusted and fastened together is an obvious example of highly developed human ingenuity. The men who could thus employ the few resources at their disposal gave proof of possessing the very faculties which find completer expression in a vast cantilever bridge. Their wooden harrows are likewise constructed of stems and stout branches cut off short and skilfully fastened together. I saw a stone roller (not round, but of a number of radiating ridges) which, when dragged over the ground would break up the clods. The labour involved in making it must have been very great ; one can easily believe that it was an important

hereditary treasure of farm-equipment. There were also all-wood carts with cleverly built wheels and not a metal nail or clamp employed. In some out-of-the-way place there is, or was, a glass factory which turned out vodka bottles. Like the work of all simple people these things were not the baldly utilitarian affairs that satisfy the so-called civilized; they were as entertaining as Roman glass: bottles in human and other shapes made to please as well as to fulfil their rudimentary purpose. I saw also a quantity of rude pottery toy figures practically identical with others which amused the children of the Bronze Age all Europe over.

Ploughs and harrows as quaint as those of Little Russia came from White Russia; but they are of a different type. Beside them was a dug-out boat like those used by Ancient Britons; also a wooden loom, extraordinarily rude in construction but capable of turning out serviceable material. I saw an Indian in Bolivia weaving with a similar rude machine. For a beehive they use a hollow log which they haul up into a tree in some likely position. A rather better type of low-warp loom comes from the Balkans and much embroidery decorating costumes. Here we meet with a more advanced village life, employing furniture which is gaily painted and many chests cheerfully adorned. There is much pottery made, and a life-size model of a man at work shows us how. The potter with his feet works his rudely formed horizontal wheel on which the standing pot takes

form. We are also shown a quantity of Jewish silver from the same district. One wonders whether it was only the Jews there that were well enough off to own silver ornaments. Great Russia introduces us to a more advanced agricultural life. It is illustrated by elaborate and attractive models of large farmhouses built of wood with barn and cattle-sheds all under one great roof. There is also a model of a timber-built church and bell-tower, not without architectural pretensions but artistically falling far behind the wooden churches of Norway. Great Russia is the country for elaborate wood-carving. Everything made of wood has its finish of carving. The carts, the benches, the sledges, the houses—all are carved, and so are the ivory and bone boxes in which the farmer's wife keeps her treasures.

The Arctic peoples of Russia, like all those who surround the polar outposts of human habitation, possess domestic arts and crafts of an extreme traditional antiquity. Specially good are they in all kinds of work connected with skins and leather. Their costumes are gay and much embroidered. Here we are shown a family living in a tent of skins and all at work with their various utensils. It is hard to believe that they are not alive, so vivid is the impression of actuality which they produce. Some of the Siberian nomads of the North must be well off, for they are rich in silver ear-rings, *châtelaines*, and other ornaments. Also they know how to provide themselves with creature comforts to judge by an





SASSANIAN DISH FROM SOUTH RUSSIA.  
*Now in the Cabinet des Antiques, Paris.*



undeveloped type of still, constructed out of an iron pan with a wooden cover from which tubes lead to pots for the reception of the spirit.

Most of the peasant products of Turkestan are of the normal Islamic type and do not call for comment. Every one knows Bokhara rugs. A good deal of silver jewellery is produced, the normal treasure of nomads. It conserves very ancient forms. There is also much brilliant but crude pottery likewise antique in aspect.

Such are some of the superficial observations which I made during an all too short visit to this most interesting gallery. It would have repaid careful and prolonged study with simultaneous attention to geographical conditions, but for that I had no time. School children are brought by hundreds to this Museum and shown how their fellow-countrymen live in different parts. They are not merely taught the names of places and districts upon a map, but they are shown the models of the people, their costumes, the kind of houses they live in, and the kind of work they do with the very tools which are exhibited and explained to them. Such a Museum thus employed is an excellent educational instrument. I should have liked to hear one of the lessons.

#### XIV

### RUSSIAN PAINTING FROM THE TIME OF PETER THE GREAT

The mediaeval Russian Schools of painting, which absorbed, developed, expressed, and preserved the ancient Byzantine tradition supported by the Orthodox Church, were superseded in and after the time of Peter the Great by Italian, Dutch, French, and English artists, or by Russians trained in those foreign schools. The first demand made upon them was for portraits. Greek and mediaeval Russian artists were not portrait painters. The superstitions connected with the Evil Eye lingered late in Russia, where the Middle Age must be regarded as lasting down to the end of the seventeenth century. It was considered dangerous to have your portrait painted. Some evilly disposed person might stick pins in it, or otherwise maltreat it, with corresponding danger to the person portrayed ! A few seventeenth-century portraits of Muscovite nobles exist, but very few, and all, I think, painted abroad and depicting travelled and relatively enlightened subjects.

Under the patronage of Peter the Great, Western art took root in Russia and presently attained a

local development which continued down to the present day. The old Byzantine-Russian art did not wholly disappear, but it lost vitality and remained the obedient servant of the Orthodox Church. Schools of Ecclesiastical art were maintained in some of the great monasteries, such for example as the Troitskaya Lavra, for the production of icons for public and private devotion, but those schools had no spontaneous life. The Revolution may be expected to have extinguished them.

The principal collections of modern Russian pictures of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries which I was able to visit are in the Tretyakov Gallery in Moscow and the Alexander III Museum at Petersburg. There are also some rooms-full in the upper part of the Rumyantsev Gallery at Moscow. I will endeavour very briefly to give my impression of the school as a whole without attempting to take the reader through these galleries in succession.

The Peter the Great room at Petersburg is filled with portraits mostly by Russian painters few of whose names are remembered. They depict, of course, royal and official personages in a conventional fashion. There is no artistic inspiration and none was called for, the purpose of these pictures being that of modern photographs, the mere record of the everyday aspect of the man. A life-size bronze figure memorializes the Empress Anne, but that is by the gifted Italian artist, K. B. Rastrelli (*ob.* 1744), a kinsman of the architect. Under Catherine II a



powerful impulse was given to all kinds of art production but of a purely imperial and courtly kind. Portraits of her both painted and sculptured are very numerous, most of them displaying her in official robes and wearing the imperial insignia. Thus Torelli's picture dated 1762 shows her wearing the collar of the Order of St. Andrew with the crown beside her, the sceptre lacking the Orlov diamond, and the Orb without its sapphire and big diamond. This was painted in the year of her accession. I cannot say that I paid much individual attention to her many portraits. One saw them everywhere. They cumulatively produced in one's mind a sort of composite picture of her of a very definite kind. Whatever they may individually lack or possess the ultimate impression they produce is of a kindly human sort of person, good tempered, imperious, very womanly, one who would be excellent company and a good friend, liking to be generous, in fact a large type of human being both physically and—shall I say—amorally.

Antropov was a painter of some note in the early part of the eighteenth century. Fersov was the first Russian to paint *genre* pictures. There is a Village Wedding by him showing strong peasant faces in a Rembrandtesque illumination. Rokotov shows the influence of Gainsborough in an oval portrait of a lady painted about 1780. Alexiev painted town views in the style of Belotto whose pupil he was. The most numerous represented eighteenth-century

artist is Levitski who has almost a whole room to himself in both the large galleries. He was born in 1735 and lived on till 1822. During his long life he painted in several styles reminiscent of Greuze, of Watteau, and of Gainsborough, but I do not know how these different influences reached him. Borovikovski was also an artist of some importance. While portraiture was the chief output of these painters they also produced some big historical pictures—Peter the Great lying dead, Peter the Great at the Battle of Poltava, and the like. The landscapes of this period show little originality and have left small impression on my memory.

It was not till early in the nineteenth century that a truly national school emerged. It took peasant life for its subject and treated that sympathetically. Venetsianov, the Russian Millet, painted some interesting pictures in this kind about 1830. He affected a great simplicity of pattern and design. With him were associated a group of Romantics who were followed by a realist reaction. This period if it did not produce great pictures produced at any rate precious records of Russian life, official and unofficial. I need not mention ceremonial pictures of reviews and other functions; such seldom attain any true artistic existence; but the rural life of Russia, the interiors of cottages, the village processions with banners and stolid vestmented popes, the drunken scenes, and so forth have a historical and social value which the passage of time increases. Perov

was a prominent painter of this period. Now also the middle classes come forward as subjects for painters and we are shown how they lived and their wealth increased. Here is a governess making her first appearance in such a family—a picture both humorous and pathetic. There is a whole room-full of these Russian Friths which greatly pleased the Philistine within me. Several portraits of Count Leo Tolstoy depict him at different ages and in civilized and peasant costume. Repin shows him as a ploughman.

And now yet another change appears, at least in the subjects chosen for treatment by Russian artists and to some extent also in the manner of their brushwork. The political picture arrives—pictures of prisoners, one by Yaroshenko of condemned folk looking out of a railway-carriage window on their way to Siberia. A bitterly sarcastic representation of a Village Fête and the Return to his home of one who has spent long years in Siberia obviously were intended to convey a political moral. Repin's powerful vision of the murder by John the Terrible of his son is of the same class. There is indeed a whole room-full of Repins—notable portraits among them, of Rubenstein, and other interesting men—yes! decidedly they are notable portraits. There are also some pictures influenced by Tolstoy, such as Gay's Last Supper in modern clothes and surroundings, an example of the neo-Christian school which soon died out. Poor mad Vrubel painted some strange

arresting pictures such as his Pan and the great winged Demon fallen on the Caucasus.

Among landscape painters Ivanov enjoys great local popularity, not undeserved. There is a whole room devoted to his works in the Rumyantsev Gallery at Moscow and another at Petersburg. Beside pictures they include sketches and impressionistic forecasts, dating from the early years of the nineteenth century, as well as imaginative compositions vaguely reminding one of Blake. Levitan perhaps best expresses the wide mournful Russian scenery, well set forth in a picture with a church and churchyard in the foreground and a great river in a great plain stretching far away. Finally mention must be made of Vereshchagin. Thirty-five years or more ago he attracted the attention of a large public by the exhibition of a couple of hundred or more of his pictures with which he circumambulated Western Europe. They were shown in London and at Liverpool. They depicted with studied veracity the horrors of war and especially of the Indian Mutiny—Sepoys blown from guns and the like. Some were very big. There was no attempt at refinement about them. They were frankly sensational. For a brief moment they replaced in popularity the evaporated thrills of the Doré Gallery. The artist himself visited Liverpool at that time and I saw a good deal of him. He was a passionate person and regarded himself as charged with a mission to end war. He would make his pictures

as horrible as he could. He had followed Skobelev in Turkestan and painted slaughter in his wake. A room is devoted to Vereshchagin in the Tretyakov Gallery, but it does not contain the most frightful of his works. It shows however a careful and brilliant study of the interior of a Tibetan temple which is both topically and historically interesting. Whether posterity will thank him for his war paintings who can foretell? They may in the distant future possess an interest which may compensate for their lack of charm.

Finally, both at Moscow and Petersburg, there are rooms devoted to contemporary, mainly post-impressionist, paintings, and I saw a similar exhibition at Warsaw. I do not profess to understand these things. A one-man show of the paintings of Shevchenko was considered to display eminent accomplishment. I mention the report, though I was unable to share the admiration. The fact that one cannot admire or comprehend the creation of a whole school of artists is no proof that they are not meritorious but may only be the measure of one's own limitations. Before a few of these pictures I obtained a dim sort of idea of what it was that the artist was after. Some of them certainly possessed arresting qualities. Such, for instance, was the picture of a young Jew and his girl having a good time. There was a pink church on a green ground with a red patch in it. The young man was all in black and the girl in lilac. He was standing on the ground. She was



horizontally suspended in the air over his head like a flag. Together they expressed a kind of bean-feast festivity and might have been calling out, "Are we downhearted? No!"

If, however, I can of my own spontaneous and genuine experience say nothing good of post-impressionist pictures as seen by me in Poland and Russia, I am bound to confess that it was otherwise with their decorative art. The notice-board which I saw in the Kremlin, and which I utterly failed to describe, made a powerful impression upon me and lingers vividly in my memory as a really novel and undoubtedly excellent decorative object. I could not withhold similar approval and indeed admiration from the stage scenery of a play by M. Lunacharskii, Minister of Education, which I saw in the Maly Theatre at Moscow. We had been sent tickets for a box and went down, a party of us, from the British Agency. During a brief contest of politeness as to who should occupy the best seat, a woman of the people, observing her chance, slipped in from the corridor and sat herself down on the vacant chair. I had a full view of her back during the whole evening, and I never saw one so emphatically revolutionary! *J'y suis et j'y reste* was expressed in every line of her body. I was told that at a given moment all the unoccupied seats in theatres are free, and the public, awaiting its chance in a queue, is let loose to fill them. The audience thus completed was a sight worth study. It was a good audience but not enthusiastic.

The scenery, however, was what I had come to see. I cannot describe it. Massiveness was the chief element in the effect. The stage was surrounded by massive forms. There were some crooked stairs. There was something like a door on the left. There was an open space in the middle with a rude table and some stools about it, neither table nor stools being rectangular or of any regular form; finally there were some big shaped things like pieces of Stonehenge behind and an irregular hole in one of them that might stand for a window but was used as an exit. Of course this description will give the reader no idea of what I saw, but will at least suggest to him the strangeness of the setting. The actors were impersonating village folk. Now the astonishing fact was that they appeared to be giants—7 feet high at least! Why the scenery thus magnified them I cannot say. Ours was the stage box in the lowest tier. The actors were quite close to us. I knew them to be ordinary men and women, yet I could not see them otherwise than as giants. The effect was most strange. It was felt by all of us. Whether it was an effect intentionally arrived at I cannot say, but this is certain—the drama was lifted above the level of everyday life and put on a heroic plane. The actors lost their normal individuality and became types. I could not but acknowledge that Bolshevik Drama, if I may so entitle it, is a new kind of art possessing possibilities which I am not competent to foreshadow. If this is true of the

drama it may also be true of painting and my blindness to its promise may be the result of my own limitations, for after all, and notwithstanding every effort I may make to be open-minded, catholic, and impartial, I belong to the past. I love old things, old institutions, old traditions, old ways of life, the old social structure, and the old spirit of my forefathers. Existing monuments and examples of the arts of bygone days contain more of interest and beauty than my own perhaps narrow susceptibilities can avail to appreciate and digest. For me they suffice. Let the folk of the future enjoy the arts of the future. I shall not decry their taste, but up till now I cannot share it.

IMPRESSIONS OF MOSCOW AND  
PETERSBURG

There are certain cities in the world, famous in the annals of mankind, which arouse in the visitor who comes to them for the first time an almost unescapable emotion. Such are Rome, Paris, Constantinople, Jerusalem, Delhi; and of such is Moscow. The modern railway station, it is true, does its best to damp down this sort of ardour—for are not all railway stations much of a kind and altogether devoid of romance?—though the imagined tragedy of *Anna Karenina*, so much more real to most of us than tragedies that actually happened within our knowledge, will ever endow one of the Moscow stations with a pathetic memory. I had her in my mind as the train was coming to a standstill, but unfortunately could not be sure which of Moscow's many stations was the one that ought to thrill me. The unsolved problem was quickly expelled from my thoughts by the kindly greeting extended to me by two official gentlemen, representing the Information Bureau, who had come to make the formalities of my arrival easy and to take me for a drive through the city.

What the Alexander Station may lack in stateliness and individuality is made up for on one's emergence from it by the Triumphal Gate which proclaims the entrance to a great city and the glory of Alexander I. It was indeed now at once evident that here was no mushroom growth, but a slowly enlarged assemblage of streets, enveloping in successive segments of circles the ancient nucleus planted on the bank of the river, irregular therefore and offering many a picturesque feature. The side-walks and the roads were crowded with folk pursuing their ways on foot. Trams were many, carriages few, motor-cars yet fewer. Since the last pre-war edition of Baedeker's guide-book was published, the aspect of the Moscow street-crowd has utterly changed.

"The traffic in the ill-paved streets," says Baedeker, "is extraordinarily animated. What is here known as the 'German' dress is predominant; but side by side with it we see the bearded muzhik in his bast slippers, patched caftan, and grey armyák or sheep-skin; the Russian pope in his long brown robe, with his black hat and long hair and beard; the merchant in his old-Russian fur cap, and his wife adorned with strings of genuine pearls; Circassians, Tartars, and Bokhariots, all in their national dress; Greeks in red fezes; Persians in their high conical caps of black sheepskin; and other types too numerous to mention." All this variety has utterly vanished. The throng is as great as ever, but it is all of one kind. You will scarcely meet an individual who is not to all appear-



ance a working man, probably clad in a dark-coloured tunic with a leather belt, often wearing long boots, and generally having a small black cap for head-gear. Frequently he wears white overalls as though fresh from the working bench. His former position in life is sometimes disclosed when he opens his mouth and displays a set of gold teeth. In England our working folk in the street are generally clad like our middle classes ; in Moscow the men who are at all well-to-do disguise themselves as hand-workers. A person of gentlemanly aspect is a very rare bird indeed and is probably a foreigner. If the men are thus drab the women are scarcely more ornate. Seldom does one see a pretty costume unless it be something in a simple white material of obvious home manufacture. Now and again some girl gifted with personal taste emerges from her dull sisterhood, but the exceptions are few.

While thus reflecting I was carried past various public buildings—the University, the Imperial Stables, and thus presently across the Kamenny Bridge and along the river bank. Thence the Kremlin displayed itself to my view, walled about and planted on the top of rising ground—an impressive and strange assemblage of buildings. The red battlemented walls, the great and peculiar towers, the golden domes, the palaces and other edifices facing this way and that, combine into a picturesque whole in which east and west, mediaeval and modern, are mingled together. The effect, if not stupendous, is sufficiently grand to

satisfy expectation. This is the heart of "Little Mother Moscow," where has ever centred the life of that extraordinary Russia which Europe never has and probably never will understand. The Kremlin as it thus burst upon my vision seemed to be a complete and satisfactory expression of the outlandishness of Russia from a Western point of view. Farther on, still facing the river, I noted the wall of the old city continuing the line of the Kremlin.<sup>1</sup> It was newly disclosed, the houses built up against it having been thrown down to that end. It is entered by massive gates of fanciful and picturesque architecture like the towers of the Kremlin. The Vladimir Gate is an eminent example, heavy, fanciful, and bizarre, but visibly an entrance to a place of importance. Russian architects, with all their artistic anarchy, always attain a striking effect. Their assemblages of building convince the spectator of the presence of power and authority within them.

While thus receiving a first impression of the aspect and implied spirit of Moscow there was vividly recalled to my memory a letter received by me more than thirty years ago from my old friend Mr. C. F.

<sup>1</sup> The name of the old city is Kitái-gorod, which was translated to me as the Cathay or Chinese City, the Russian name for China being Kitái. I am however told that Kitái is the Tartar word for "fortress," and that Kitái-gorod merely means the "fortified city" and has nothing to do with China. If this is the fact, it is curious that it should not be generally known to the many scholarly Russians who talked to me of the Chinese City in Moscow, and said that they did not know why it was so called.

Moberly Bell, who shortly afterwards became and is well remembered as Manager of *The Times*. He was then *Times* correspondent in Egypt. He visited Russia on his way home, and this is the description he wrote to me of Moscow as it impressed him. The letter is dated 6th of June, 1889.

“Moscow is a city of painted stucco, a sort of nightmare. Conceive every possible form you have ever seen, heard of, read of, or imagined, and jumble them together anyside up. Put a pillar on its capital, a pyramid on the top of that and a cannonball above it all. Put an obelisk on an arch or an arch on an obelisk; crush (crown?) extinguishers with squares; try to make an arch half-Norman, half-Gothic; put a spire on a tower and a tower resting on spires. Then take your paint-brush and cover every inch of your building with the most blinding paint you can find; give the preference to pea-green and vermilion, but be sure to place near the green some ‘washing blue.’ If you can then splash it with gilt you have got the general effect of Moscow, and if you can get fourteen shades of colour into one building you have got St. Basil’s, who, said my guide, ‘was a idiot, so they built him this church.’ If you want to introduce a garden into your picture make the palings of the fencing alternately red and green with two horizontals, one blue and one yellow; also encircle the trunks of the best trees with occasional rings of colour according to fancy. When you have realized this and how to cross yourself at every fifteen yards of the street to an icon, or to wait till your driver has prostrated himself thereto; when you have taken off your hat at every gate of the Kremlin and knelt in your carriage to allow the Iberian icon to pass you, then you will be wise to pay your hotel bill of £4 per day and leave Moscow with your curse.”

This diatribe, never intended to be taken literally, expresses with humorous exaggeration proper to a private letter certain elements of truth. Thus, more or less, a first view of Moscow may have impressed

a brilliant modern traveller newly escaped from a swindling hotel and tired with long railway journeys, in the days of the old regime, when its paint was often and gaudily refreshed and when the Orthodox Church imposed a mass of superstitions on the ignorant and demanded foolish formal observances from all and sundry. Now the load of superstition has been removed; time and neglect have faded the colours to a milder harmony, and the sympathetic eye may discover beauty where another, equally sincere, may still be oppressed by forms that are strange and combinations that seem to be bizarre.

It is commonly supposed in England that the Soviet Government has closed all the churches and abolished religion. Such is not the case. The monasteries are closed but all the churches are open and are still functioning except the few venerable Cathedrals which have been turned over to experts to be cleansed of modern paint and cleared of modern intrusive disfigurements. Moscow still remains a city of churches, but most of them are unimportant as works of art. The gaiety of their gilded or blue star-spangled domes with their slender crosses and light hanging rods or chains is a factor in the picturesqueness of the streets. I have briefly dealt with those possessing historical importance. I received an impression—whether justified or not I am unable to be assured—that an immense load of superstition has been lifted from the mass of the people, but that religion is unaffected. I am told indeed that there are signs of a religious

revival. A passing traveller cannot judge of such matters.

Reference has been made above to the lack of distinction observed in the streets. There is no pageantry of life. This lack is all-pervading and does not seem to be missed by the present regime. Distinction is the ultimate flower of civilization; by its presence and quality past ages are judged, by its absence they are condemned. Civilizations in the germinal stage cannot be distinguished, but until the elements of distinction appear they are liable to be harshly judged. The future civilization of Russia, which may develop on entirely novel lines out of the present ruin, may produce a distinction of its own. At present the signs of its coming are not apparent. The framework of the old distinction belonging to the Tsarist regime still exists in buildings and highways, but the old soul has utterly passed away. The present empirically improvised social organism is not in any way adapted to the structures within which it has to be housed. Imperial Palaces are useless, as Palaces, to a bureaucracy; they can only act as monuments of the past. The great houses of the aristocracy do not conveniently serve as communal dwellings. Soviet society is as ill-fitted by existing buildings as a Bolshevik Commissar would be by Imperial robes. The costly offices of banks and insurance companies fulfil no function in a country that is not only without capitalists but almost without capital.



The present administration uses the buildings it has acquired as best it can for its new purposes, and that, not merely because it has to, but because by an unexpected but actual piety it is determined to preserve its monumental inheritance from the past. This piety jealously extends over all that is old in Moscow. The original home of the exiled and executed Romanovs has been repaired. The Imperial Cathedrals are being restored. Even the street-statues of Tsars are left standing in their places if they possess merit as works of art. The equestrian statue of Skobelev is gone. They tell me it was ugly. Its place is taken by a monument to the Revolution, a much-excited female figure backed against an obelisk, but this is only a temporary affair in plaster and does not possess merit enough to warrant its reproduction in more durable material. Other revolutionary monuments, likewise in plaster, did not much impress me. Blanqui's colossal head outside a railway station already had lost an eye, and the hole was roughly filled with what looked like hard mud. A bust of Lasalle opposite my hotel window in Petersburg was rather striking, but gained nothing by being placed crooked on a disjointed pedestal which looked as though it had been shaken by an earthquake. Was that perhaps intentionally emblematical of the effect of revolutionary ideas?

To return, however, to a larger vision; it must be evident to a reflective and observant new-comer to Moscow that the old soul of the city is dead and only

the ancient framework remains. Is a new spirit replacing it—a spirit capable of reanimating scores of millions of human beings and infusing into them that kind of common all-pervading ideal which vitalizes a nation? No passing traveller can answer such a question; only an inspired Russian could answer it. As an ignorant traveller I kept my eyes open and was ever on the alert to observe signs of new life. In the multitudes that fill the streets and that loiter upon holidays in public places I observed nothing but a vague placidity. There were no street-corner orators, no demonstrations other than those officially organized. Absolute order reigned everywhere, though neither soldiers nor police were much in evidence, except the pointsmen regulating traffic at crowded cross-roads.

The folk reposing in parks and gardens on holidays gave little sign of actively enjoying life. They did not converse much nor did I often hear them laugh. I saw no open-air beer-gardens, cafés, or concerts. Only the children appeared to be having a good time. The intention to give them pleasure is evident. There are large sandheaps for the youngest to dig in. They are taken in parties into the country on holidays. They are convoyed through Palaces and Museums in a way that interests and does not bore them. They have little Toy Museums of their own; I have already described one at Moscow. I am told that they are instructed in the principles of the Revolution and taught to raise in chorus revolu-

tionary songs. I wonder if they are so far like the children of other countries as to react when they grow up against the ideas inculcated into them by their teachers, or whether they will prove to be orientally docile. Thirty years hence we shall be able to judge. I hope I may live to see how the generation now passing through the schools turns out.

I do not suppose that any Western person understands or ever will understand Bolshevism. It is not a political theory, still less a party platform. It is more like a new religion, which has its apostles and enthusiastic votaries but toward which the great mass of the people is inert. They are glad that the old regime is destroyed; they do not want the Grand Dukes back. They look to the powers that be to shape the new world for them, and in the presence of that shaping the townsfolk seem inert. Those powers are in the hands of a group of new believers who are possessed not so much by a theory as by a faith. One can find a rough parallel to them in the Early Christians when they had captured Constantine and the Imperial Government. The old pagan religions were dead; few faithful believers in any of them survived. The actively Christian body was small but was very much alive. There was no rival body with a like vitality. By General Councils Christianity gradually defined itself. It created and presently enforced orthodoxy. There was always room for differences of opinion but they

were only allowed to exist outside the boundaries of those parts of the faith which had received official definition.

It is so with Bolshevism. The vague faith tends to become more definite. It is in the keeping of "The Party," which consists of some 300,000 persons officially recognized as members. Their representatives meet in Congress from time to time and define doctrines. What has once been officially defined is binding on all. Difference of opinion on such fundamentals is not tolerated. That is the unpardonable sin of Sectionalism. Outside the defined area differences are allowable and discussions are permitted and even encouraged. But orthodoxy spreads its net ever wider, and strikes its roots ever more deeply. Those who expect a quick and violent reaction against the present regime are likely to be disappointed. To demand that Bolshevism shall not proselytize beyond the frontiers of their country is as if you were to demand that Christians should not send out missionaries or that Jesuits should abstain from making converts. Bolshevism is like the religion of Islam in the days of its early vigour. It must either advance or atrophy, but it can advance only in prepared ground. Healthy peoples are immune from it. It can thrive only upon misery and social injustice. It is not to be beaten by counter-propaganda but by social reform.

Bolshevism, moreover, differs fundamentally from all other religions in this that, whereas they envisage

a future life and happiness therein, it concerns itself only with the material world of the present moment. Therefore it must ultimately stand or fall by its success or failure in dealing with the social condition of the masses of the people. Its theories have to stand the practical test of everyday experience. They cannot escape that test. As far as the peasantry are concerned the problem is easy. They have got possession of the land and they mean to keep it. Local famines will come and pass, but the bulk of Russia's vast population will be able to support itself without administrative help or direction. It is otherwise in the great cities. They depend upon manufacture, and if the whole business of manufacture is in the hands of Government it becomes one great business which must be carried on at a profit if it is to be carried on at all for any length of time. The Bolshevik problem thus resolves itself into this: Can manufacture be profitably carried on consistently with the maintenance of the orthodox Bolshevik faith? If it cannot, if Bolshevistically run factories must of necessity be run at a loss, one of two things must happen: either the Bolshevik theory must be modified to square with human nature, or manufacture must atrophy and the towns will gradually shrink in population. I am told that a million working folk have already quitted the towns and settled in the country. The fact that Petersburg has shrunk in population while Moscow has increased proves nothing. It may be accounted for



by the transfer of the capital from the one to the other. I am also told that Odessa is dead, but that may only be because it was the port of Bessarabia which has become Roumanian. On the other hand, they say that Rostov-on-the-Don has enormously grown. I merely relate what I heard. Bolshevism will succeed or fail according as it proves itself adjustable to the curious Russian temperament and the normal conditions of human nature.

One thing only appears certain. The westernization of Russia begun by Peter the Great is to be ended. In future she will develop on her own lines and will produce whatever system of government and social structure she can devise for herself. At present she lives under a regime little different in essentials from that of the autocratic Tsars. It may be that some form of autocracy is essential for her. Time alone will show. The world will have no more interesting drama to watch during the twentieth century than the recrystallization of Russia. At present the germs of the new paradise which it was the purpose of the Revolution to produce are not visible to a passing traveller. Nevertheless they may be alive and obscurely growing.

The new official name of Peter the Great's capital on the Neva is Leningrad. During the War we were taught to call it Petrograd. Its original name was St. Petersburg. Which of the names the English-speaking world will settle down to is uncertain. Throughout these chapters I have called it Peters-

burg, following the habit of a lifetime. Every one will know what city I mean, and that after all is the purpose of a name. Petersburg and Moscow produce very different impressions on a new-comer. There is plenty of life in the streets of both cities, but one gets a feeling of waxing life in the one, waning in the other. Moscow is bursting with population. It is hard to find enough roofs to cover the folk. People are crowded into the big confiscated houses. If any were ruined during the Revolution such ruins are not in evidence. In Petersburg on the other hand there are more roofs than are required, and that notwithstanding the great destruction of revolutionary days. Gaunt ruins stand in all the main streets and no attempt is being made to restore them because they are not needed. A visitor, who knew nothing of the Moscow of the Tsars, passing through its streets, would observe no structural evidence of civil disturbance. Revolution is writ large on the face of Petersburg, and the change visible to those who remember what it was is fundamental and obvious. For Petersburg far more than Moscow was the creation of the Tsars and the aristocracy. It was a city of splendour and display, European rather than Russian. It had organized, it controlled, and it spent the wealth of Russia. Its wide streets and residential quarters presented the successive façades of great and luxurious houses. It was surrounded by beautiful suburbs full of gardened villas and places of entertainment and delight. The villas are ruins;

the suburbs are falling into utter decay ; the gardens have gone back to nature. One lawn-tennis field alone survives of all the yacht-clubs, the music gardens, and other establishments which provided opportunities for social amenities or display. "Ichabod" is written over all.

No city was better equipped with vast and luxurious hotels than Petersburg. Two of them are still functioning. The one I stayed in retained the wrecks of its costly equipment. Its size may be judged from the fact that the corridor on which my rooms opened is 170 yards long. Nothing, however, appears to be mended when it wears out or goes wrong. The looking-glass and other small fittings in my bathroom were gone, cold water flowed from the "hot" taps, the expensive brocade coverings of the furniture were ripped, the window fastenings did not go home, the carpet was in holes. On the top storey is a restaurant, still fairly good. It runs out into the open air as a roof-garden where there are little compartments for small dining parties and a band sometimes plays. The effect is rather pathetic, for it is easy to imagine how much better things used to be done. On Mondays no food may be served after the late luncheon hour. Visitors who know the ways of the place lay in provisions and picnic in their rooms. The first Monday found me ignorant, hungry and unprepared. What was I to do? The hotel clerk said I must go to a restaurant. He directed me to the best—"second turning to the right down

the Nevski Prospect and then the third house on the left and the third floor in it."

I followed instructions and entered the indicated house. It had evidently been an assemblage of rather superior flats in better days, but now it was in utter disrepair, the staircase dirty, the walls scarred, everything shabby and uncared for from roof-tree to basement. There was no sign of any restaurant that I could see, but its existence was confirmed by a man descending as I mounted. The outer door of a flat stood ajar. I entered it and found within a room with tables and signs of food. It was a dirty room. The tables were covered with dirty oilcloth. There were stools to sit on. At the door was a man who sold me bits of paper like tram tickets. They were vouchers for food. No one asked me what I wanted or took any notice of me. I sat down at a table and looked about. There was a kind of counter on the far side of the room with bottles on it and some women standing behind. They could only talk Russian, but the ticket-seller had some German. I was told there were only two things to eat, so I ordered a plate of each and awaited results. Presently a plate of macaroni and one of millet-porridge were shot out in front of me, with an incredibly foul pewter spoon wherewith to eat them. I cleaned the spoon in the porridge and ate a few mouthfuls of the macaroni. The bottles on the counter proved to contain kumiss. They were clean and the contents were well prepared. I dined off them.

If this is, as I was again by several persons assured, the best public restaurant in Petersburg, it throws a lurid light on the way people have to feed in communal establishments. I made no further exploration on that line of country. I took my experience to be emblematic of the city's general state. It is like the home of people who have gone down in the world. Ruined cities have become terribly common in the last ten years and it has been my fate to see many of them. I was familiar with Ypres and Arras, Verdun, Soissons, and Noyon during the last two years of the War. I wandered through the burnt-out ruins of a square mile of Smyrna while the house fronts were still falling. I have searched the destroyed quarter of Constantinople for the remnants of Byzantine buildings. Petersburg is not ruined like them. It displays many a burnt-out building, but the damage from which it chiefly suffers was not accomplished in a few hours or days of tumult. It has been dying of atrophy during the last five or six years, and much of the damage is not very apparent. Thus numbers of large houses, emptied of their owners and left unoccupied, had their floors and other wood-work rent out of them by people starving for fuel. Externally these houses, save for more or fewer broken window-panes, appear to be intact. They are however uninhabitable and it would cost much to bring them back into a serviceable condition.

Thus the great vistas along the once so stately streets are more impressive now than facts would



suggest. The Nevski Prospect, I forget how renamed, is still an imposing street. No fine equipages animate it, but many trams and a drab pedestrian crowd. I have often been asked whether Moscow and Petersburg are not filthy. The answer is that the streets are scrupulously clean. Those responsible for municipal administration do the best they can with the exiguous funds at their disposal. The streets that I used were swept every day. They were also watered from hose-pipes. So long as the old equipment lasts it is utilized. The trouble is that as it wears out it is not replaced. The old machine still retains some momentum. It remains to be seen whether the new administration can revive or replace it by a new driving force. Russian streets were never famous for their pavements. Now such pavements as they had are dangerously outworn. The wood-paving of the roadway has disappeared in large patches. Where it remains it is worn into deep holes. A car must be driven over it in zigzags and even the most skilful driver bumps his passengers continually. The side walks are little better. He that does not watch his feet will trip and fall. The houses appear to be drained into domed cesspools with a circular iron lid at the crown of the dome. Several of these domes have fallen in, leaving great holes in street or footway. The holes are not mended, but roughly masked with any old broken piece of ironwork that comes handy.

The machinery of life, in fact, is wearing out faster

than it has been possible to replace it. The present administration is not unconscious of the situation. On the contrary it is working hard to bring betterment about; but it is poor; it lacks funds. A few years may make a great difference, but while the whole national industry works at a loss funds are decreasingly available. The old public gardens and gardened areas to which the public had access are badly kept. People walk across the grass and cut paths in it. Everything is untidy. There is no public discipline in the maintenance of amenities. Boys and young men may sometimes be seen in quiet streets playing a game which appears to be a sort of rounders. Another favourite game is a kind of nine-pins at which you throw a log of wood. Passers-by must look out for their shins. The multitude of pedestrians in the streets follow no rule of the foot-way. They are liable to bump against one another. If one is in a hurry one must nip quickly to right and left to avoid collisions and forge ahead. This vague perambulation seems characteristic of Russian mentality.

The brilliant effect of Petersburg in the past depended largely upon two factors: paint and the brightness of the air. The air of both Moscow and Petersburg reminded me of the United States. It is brightly stimulating. Petersburg is seldom hot, but Moscow, considerably further south, can be very warm. At Moscow in June we chose the shady side of the street, at Petersburg the sunny side. The

clearness of the air gives value to the long vistas of the wide straight streets. The golden domes and spires of the churches are visible afar at the ends of the great avenues. They give character to the city as beheld from miles away across the plain. But the shabbiness of street façades is made very evident by this same atmospheric clearness. Almost every building in Petersburg is of brick covered with stucco and painted. The smartness of the city depended on frequent repair of the stucco and renewal of the paint. Neglected cornices and balconies have a way of falling into the street when laden with snow. Moulded ornaments also suffer from frost and thaw and leave unsightly scars. But worst of all for general effect is the degradation of the paint. That was the skin of the city. The whole structure suffers from skin-disease.

I do not record these observations in any hostile spirit but merely as obvious facts. They imply two causes. First, the utter disappearance of the Tsarist regime, which no one—not even the most conservative—expects to return. They talk of it as the White Rose folk talk of the return of the Stuarts. Nothing was ever more completely destroyed. Secondly, they express the poverty of the new Government, which suffers more than any other from “the eternal want of pence that vexes public men.” My reason for laying stress on this is to emphasize the difficulties which have had to be faced in the conservation of works of art which has been so remarkably accom-

plished. In most countries thus situated the Fine Arts would have been the first to be starved and neglected. The temptation to sell must have been very great. Even if that temptation were resisted it would have been the easier course to neglect the art-heritage of the country. In fact conservation has been well maintained both by the active intervention of the Government and by the patriotic devotion of Museum staffs. I am told that they are very poorly paid, less even than unskilled labourers. It may be true. In England it certainly is the fact that the salary of many brilliant scholars is less than the wages of a bricklayer of little skill ; the position of the learned is not likely to be better in Russia. The fact is that the Soviet Government has not the money wherewith to pay them better. Why it is so poor is not my affair.

Circumstances being what they are, it is very remarkable that not merely the preservation of works of art but the study of art-history should be so energetically pursued. It often happened, during my visit to Russia, that some Museum official could not show me his treasures at a particular time because he had a lecture to deliver. I was puzzled by the number of these lectures till it was explained to me that art-history was one of the most popular subjects of study at the Universities and Museums. The students are either young persons hopeful of appointments in Museums or teachers qualifying to conduct classes of children round public galleries, palaces, or

the confiscated houses of the nobility. I know not whether this is a passing phase of public interest or whether I obtained an exaggerated impression of the facts, but of this I am assured: there is more interest taken in artistic treasures and monuments to-day in Russia than in any other country I have visited. Whether that interest is destined to be maintained or not, it has at all events availed in tiding over days of peril for Russian art-collections, which may now be considered safe from indiscriminate looting and destruction. If the Soviet Government is ever compelled by the force of circumstances to sell them, they will be sold for their full value and acquired by persons or institutions that will take good care of their costly purchases.



## XVI

### PETERSBURG TO LONDON

Writers who record their journeys in books of travel have this advantage over the rest of the world, that they do not have to refer to musty old manuscript diaries for the revival of past experiences, but can recall the adventures of bygone days with the help of nicely printed and illustrated volumes. If therefore I now add a superfluous chapter on the way I returned from Petersburg to London, it is not so much in the reader's interest as in my own. I followed a well-worn route, sufficiently described in many a guide-book, but it was so enjoyable and gave me so much unexpected pleasure that I am anxious not to commit the power to revive its features to the sole guardianship of an increasingly defective memory.

I left Petersburg on an afternoon train by the Helsingfors railway, parting at the station with regret from kind friends of the Hermitage staff whose companionship had been so pleasant and profitable to me. The last view of the city showed the golden dome of St. Isaac's and the spire of St. Peter and St. Paul shining in the sunlight. We passed through

miles of woodland once very smart with parks and country houses and summer resorts but now shabby and decayed. I was not long in striking up acquaintance with the only other first-class traveller on the train, a Princeton graduate newly arrived from Pekin by the Trans-Siberian Railway. I was eager to hear his experiences of that journey and interested to gather that it can now be made with relatively little discomfort. But the man himself interested me more. He was out to see the world and to earn his expenses as he went along. He was not one of your "before-the-mast" adventurers. His idea of travel was to go comfortably, in first-class carriages and sleeping-cars and stopping at good hotels. He had already been more than two years on the way and had turned his hand to many occupations. Thus he had personally conducted a "bunch of women" to the Grand Cañon. He had taught American in a China high-school and learnt Chinese. He had been some kind of overseer of workmen on a section of a dam that was somewhere a-building. He had bought curios on credit in Japan and sold them through an agent in Chicago. He had been down as far as Singapore and had travelled in Formosa, and in some parts of the Chinese interior. He was now on his way to Stockholm and Berlin, where he expected to pick up a job of shepherding American tourists to Paris and probably also to Wembley, but with some expectations of circling round by way of Switzerland and Italy. He intended also to see Spain and England

before returning to America. Time was no object to him, and he felt sure of getting work at home on the basis of what he had learnt abroad. In the big cities he did not trouble much about Museums, but gravitated to the Department Stores, where he priced the goods. He was a walking dictionary about the prices of everything everywhere. He had \$400 in his pocket and was quite happy. It simply did not occur to him that when they were spent he would have any difficulty in replacing them.

I think we reached the frontier in a couple of hours. My *laissez passer* saved me from all trouble, but my Princeton friend's baggage was thoroughly searched and every line of writing in it was read. There were letters from "his girl" which the officials suggested he might as well leave behind to save the trouble of reading them, but he thought otherwise and eventually he was allowed to pass. The station was uncomfortable and provided little or no refreshment. After a very long halt the train moved on about half-a-mile to the Finnish frontier, where passports, visas, and luggage were again examined much less meticulously. The station was new built, a pleasant place, simple, clean and convenient, and served with much courtesy. It has a charming refreshment room, where simple but nicely cooked food was supplied in an atmosphere of hospitality.

It seems a churlish thing for me to say, after all the kindness shown to me in Russia, but if I am to

tell the whole truth I must here put on record that in this frontier station of Finland I experienced a sense as of the removal of a great weight which had been oppressing me. I cannot explain just how this weight had been felt. I did not experience the imposition of it on entering Russia, but as the days passed it seemed slowly to accumulate. The sense of freedom gradually disappeared. Though every one was kind one felt the presence of an oppression, not on oneself but all-pervading. Never have I felt so completely a stranger in a strange land; with successive days what at first was a dim feeling took more definite shape and condensed into an ever increasingly conscious oppression. I imagine one might have passed through the same experience in the Russia of the Tsars. Americans often praise what they call the "air of liberty" which they claim as characteristic of their country. They possess it in common with all the English-speaking dominions. The moral atmosphere of Russia is a very different compound of emotional chemistry.

The part of Finland through which our train now bore us was not different in physical character from the lands across the frontier, but we found ourselves passing "nice little properties" and the signs of comfort and even prosperity. A 10-foot-deep railway cutting displayed glacial remains; the evidence that the whole of this region was once covered with ice was plain. Forests and farms alternated. The signs of a great timber industry were visible on all

sides. Next morning we arrived at Helsingfors in rain—the first rain that fell upon me since leaving England. My intention was to spend a day or two there, but the friend I hoped to meet was absent; the rain chilled my ardour; a boat was on the point of sailing for Stockholm. I found I could just catch it and I succumbed to the temptation. It was a small boat and crowded. All the cabins were taken and I had to sleep in the saloon. We went forth on to calmest water and steered a devious way among countless islands. They were all rounded by ice and many just emerged from the water like the backs of huge whales, often with a big boulder or two perched on them where they were dropped by the retreating ice. We passed through narrows as exiguous as a reach of the Thames and made sharp turns this way and that. Little red-painted homesteads dotted the shores, and all were varnished with rain. The homeless gulls accompanied us. In a dead calm, with grey sky, grey sea, and the low islands, some bare, some wooded, we touched at Hangö. The water avenue continued to be our way, with passages opening out to right and left, and steamers suddenly appearing out of them like motor-cars from by-roads.

The weather and the scenery (on a miniature scale) reminded me of the channels about the Straits of Magellan, but there all is desolate and mainly unhabited; here the tidying hand of man is continuously in evidence. Delightful homesteads with an



island apiece were common—each with its jetty, boathouse, bathing-house, its orchard in blossom, its house and garden and its yacht moored near by. There were no ugly buildings, blots on the landscape. The houses, little wooden red-gabled things picked out with white, often nestled among trees. In winter the sea is frozen and the people can go over the ice from island to island. Now the waters were alive with sailing and motor-boats. A man must here be very poor who does not own a little yacht. The intricate course among islands and promontories is marked by tiny white lighthouses in which the light only needs to be renewed once a year.

During the night we passed over open sea for a couple of hours, but when I awoke we were among islands again and so continued for the rest of the way. The morning was lovely. The islands grew higher, the woods of larger trees, country houses became more numerous and finer. Gardens multiplied and the waterways became fuller of vessels of all kinds. Obviously we were approaching a city. Steamers gathered from side channels into the water highway and picturesque sailing vessels, two-masted, fore-and-aft rigged, laden with timber. They gracefully bowed to us as the wash of our waves reached them. There was not a single advertisement hoarding anywhere. Even factories scarcely proclaimed their names and there was not one of them that blotted the landscape. Every building had some picturesque feature.

Before these pleasant visions had had time to pall we entered the final reach and Stockholm opened her arms to receive us, surely one of the most beautiful cities in the world, fairer even than I remembered it, for I had not before approached it from the sea. The old city is on an island, blocking the broad channel which divides the mainland to north and south whereon the modern city spreads abroad. There are quays and gardens and the aspect of refinement in every direction. Water stretches every way, alive with boats coming and going. The Palace is the worthy and admirable centre of the place. A four-square mass, finely proportioned, broken only by one great entrance approached by ramps, it produces by its simplicity, its rightness, its reserve an effect which no other Palace known to me in the world surpasses or even rivals. It reminded me of a *mot* of Gambetta's. He was discussing with an architect the design to be made for a new public building. It was to be thus and so, and "*surtout pas d'architecture.*" How easy it would have been for an architect to have spoiled the Stockholm palace with "*architecture*"! I am told that the original design provided for a row of statues to stand along the level sky-line. The king drew his pen across the lot—a wise monarch.

Habits, whether bad or good, are not eradicated in a moment. The momentum of Russia carried me quickly to the National Museum. There I saw Rembrandts again, well known to all his admirers,

and other Dutch pictures; among the Italians a roundel by Piero di Cosimo, and portraits by Lotto and Romanino. Best of all was a very remarkable battle-picture with two riders in the foreground splendidly painted; it seemed to me near Velazquez, but I have forgotten to inquire about it. There are French pictures of importance by Oudry and Chardin and the finest Boucher I ever saw. Among English pictures is a sketch of Lady Hamilton, which I remember in a London drawing-room. The Swedish pictures were worth more study than I had time to give them. This part of the collection has been much added to in recent years and is becoming quite comprehensive. I also examined the boxes of drawings by Rembrandt, already well known to me from reproductions, and the large collection of Claude Mellans, a speciality of the Museum. Among works of decorative art is a rare and splendid jewelled morse of the fourteenth century and golden treasures of the Goths with their hoard of Byzantine coins, their gold medals, silver cups, and swords.

Hospitable friends of the Museum staff carried me off to lunch in a vaulted cellar in the old town. It is in the basement of an unassuming seventeenth-century house in a quiet street. A tourist would not find it easily nor would the ground-floor restaurant suggest the romance of lower down. A steep stone staircase led to two connected tunnel-vaulted rooms, one on a lower level than the other. They were lit by candles. There were long heavy tables

and benches to sit on. The maids wore pretty Louis XV costumes, gay with Boucher pink. Most of the company knew one another. Beer was served in wooden tankards, just as in the days when the poet Bellman (1740-95) used to frequent the place. He left his lute behind him. A man at the end of the far room called for it and sang a song. He passed it on to another who did the like, and then a third. All applauded; the company became joyous; we drank healths and generally unfroze. Some one told me the romantic story of Helga de la Brache. Then entered a poet, but he was shy and hid behind a massive pier, being tired and fixed in intention neither to talk nor to be talked to, and least of all to sing. This might have thrown a blight on the proceedings had not a waitress bearing a tray full of plates and dishes chosen the moment to fall down the stone stairs. She was not hurt, but there was a fine smashing of crockery, wherein the human boy in all of us delights. Another health, another song, and the hour was up; we scattered to our various tasks in the work-a-day world and the cellar relapsed into silence.

I was carried to the church of St. Nicholas to see the palladium of Stockholm, Bernt Notke's St. George and the Dragon. He was a fifteenth-century sculptor of Lübeck, an artist of great genius. In the year 1471, when Sten Sture was about to lead his troops into the battle of Brunkeberg, he swore a vow to St. George. In celebration of the victory which rescued

Sweden from Danish domination he ordered this sculpture to be made. Never was the knightly saint more gloriously depicted, never the dragon more horribly fantastic. The group is over life-size, carved in wood and richly painted and gilt. The upright knight on his elaborately caparisoned horse is above the writhing body of the mighty dragon, whose head is all spikes and horns and teeth and his hideous body yellow and green with spots and warts. The group used to stand, high raised on a sculptured pedestal, at the east end of the church, where all could see it behind and above the altar. It must have been, and what still remains of it is, a glorious sight.

After this I had little patience for the Mausoleum Church of the Kings, with its visible coffins, iron doors, and other panoply of death. Just now I was in love with life and longed for the open air, the sunshine, and the cloudless day. So I drove off to the park wherein are gathered and erected ancient cottages and farm buildings all equipped with peasant tools. They were rude but very ingenious and the general effect of the houses was suggestive of solid comfort. Live animals in compounds were interspersed among the houses and trees, and wandering paths led the stranger now to reindeer and now to seals. There were great bison in shabby spring coats, and high cages of eagles, vultures, and the like, while at the top of the hill a tower fitted with a lift gives access to a platform whence all Stockholm and its wooded,



watered, and islanded surroundings are widely displayed. Beyond them is a level horizon line all round, for these are not hills that one sees but a low plateau smoothed by ice and rifted by water. Distant music ascended from east and west. The air was still. Peace and plenty seemed to abound whichever way one looked.

As the long summer day of the North had still many hours to run, I committed myself to a car to drive out into the country. Off we went through woods and beside waters, arms of the sea that looked like rivers and lakes all embowered in trees. The brightness of the low lingering sun lay across the vistas that opened and closed as we passed by. Uncounted little houses looked forth at us, houses nestling in woods and standing on sheep-backed rocks from which one might think that the ice had but just retreated only in time for the trees to grow; so fresh are the glacier-scratchings. But that all happened long ago. Soil has gathered and moss and lilacs have grown and now all the gardens are aflush with bloom. Heaths are flowering among the rocks and I know not what more beside. The little houses look like homes—happy homes, one guesses—and here are pairs and singles, old and young wending towards them. If within any there are broken hearts and sad they give no sign. Surely to such a paradise they never come! Quitting the car I stroll forward on foot among the blossoming horse-chestnuts in search of where to dine. It would be nice to find a little

restaurant with a terrace overlooking a little harbour where little boats might be lying at anchor. I should like other people to be dining, that I might look at them and make up stories about them, and if there were a little music, not too loud, that also would be pleasant. I turned a corner, and lo! there they all were—the terrace, the harbour, the diners, and a tinkling band! A perfect day thus perfectly ended, the sun setting in golden glory.

Thirty-five years ago or more I was with friends at Trollhättan, where the waters of Lake Wener pour down in a rapid of impressive volume. We saw a steamer named *Juno* entering the lowest of the locks which mount to the Göta Canal, whereby one can traverse the width of Sweden from Gothenburg to Stockholm. That traverse had lingered in my memory as a thing to be made, and now the chance had come. By a curious coincidence it was on that same *Juno* that I now took passage, leaving Stockholm on such a morning as makes one in love with life. The stately city was soon left behind and we were on the glassy waters of Lake Mälaren. Once more I noted the ubiquity of charming houses, the absence of advertisements, the innocuousness of factories. I was shamed for the ugliness of British Industry.

In a few hours, after passing a length of canal, we were on the sea again, winding among skerries where we overtook an English yacht with auxiliary motor navigated by three happy amateurs. After a

restful night, of which I stood in some need, I awoke in Lake Roxen close to an encampment of 400 Boy Scouts. At 5 a.m. their camp-fire was alight and cooking toward. They enjoyed the shelter of a wood; the ruins of an Abbey were near at hand. The scenery traversed by the canal is the domestic scenery of Sweden. Nowhere is it as pretty as the best reaches of the Thames, but it is everywhere agreeable—farms, fields, villages, and often avenues of trees close beside and even overarching our steamer. It was a time of radiant, triumphant spring—hedges of lilac, chestnuts, apples and mountain-ash all in flower, cherry-blossom just fallen, young green crops, lush meadows, kingcups regarding themselves in the water, nature in gayest mood. A chorus of bird-song came and went. Butterflies flickered about. Staircases of locks took an hour or two to pass and gave time for walks ashore. Thus we were able to visit the carefully excavated ruins of Wreta, a twelfth-century Cistercian nunnery, where the remains of a cloister are wrought into a pergola. Motala, where we entered Lake Wetter, is a manufacturing town which builds engines of various sorts, yet it is tidy and clean, neither vitiating the air nor disfiguring the landscape. At Wadstena we stopped long enough to visit the castle built by Gustavus Vasa, a huge and simple pile within which the rooms must be of enormous height.

The highest point of the canal is between the two great lakes. Here in places it is very narrow and we can touch the trees as we go by. Lake Wener

is a larger sheet of water than I had pictured—100 miles long by 50 wide. Unless the visibility is unusually clear one loses sight of land as one crosses it. We chanced to run into fog early in the morning as we were approaching the western shore. There was not a breath of wind nor a ripple on the water. The fog was full of sunlight, yet densely opaque. Whistles were blowing and fog-horns bleating all about us as we felt our way very slowly toward a buoy which would not come in sight. From Wenersborg to Trollhättan the mild delights of the way continue with little variation. The canal must turn the falls by a staircase of locks. There are in fact two staircases side by side, one of smaller and older locks than the other. While the steamer is being manœuvred down we have plenty of time to visit the falls. The volume of water is the impressive feature. It is used as a source of power, but there is plenty to spare. Cataracts rather bore me unless there are rapids to shoot, but no one can shoot those of Trollhättan. The remainder of the way is a blank in my memory. Comfortable Sweden continued to pass by us in panorama. I think the Dictatorship of the Proletariat will have little chance of establishment in that country. There seemed to be no Proletariat to enthrone. After three days on the canal-boat I was not sorry to land at Gothenburg, where next morning I took ship on a very well found boat for London. During an hour or two after starting we were descending the river, and I was in a mood of

strange content. I wanted it to last, but presently began to be bored. I wonder whether the attainment of everlasting felicity is an ideal worth pursuit. Some people may find a foretaste of it at sea. I am not of their number.



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